Blueprint

for building a better

Nova Scotia

....A 2005 Progress Report

NOVA SCOTIA

Executive Summary

Premier John Hamm and his government have been the first in Nova Scotia to openly report progress in fulfilling their commitments. The 2005 Annual Progress Report on *Blueprint for building a better Nova Scotia*, is the second update issued by Premier John Hamm and his government since returning to office for a second mandate, August 18, 2003, and the sixth annual update since first elected in 1999.

The provincial government continues to deliver an active agenda that is making a positive difference in the lives of many Nova Scotians. Steps forward include:

- obtaining an offshore agreement, which has meant $830 million in an up-front payment, the guarantee of 100% of our entitled revenues without clawback, no ceilings as oil prices go up, and a legislated review of the agreement before 2020;
- signing a memorandum of understanding with universities offering a three-year commitment of $34 million in new funds to help keep tuition fee increases to a minimum;
- releasing Learning for Life II after hosting the largest-ever Education Partners Forum in Truro to seek out concerns of Nova Scotians on education priorities;
- put in place funding to implement a province-wide, healthy school breakfast program for children in the early grades;
- enhancing funding for adults in care;
- growing the Affordable Housing Program to provide new housing options for low- to moderate-income Nova Scotians;
- put in place funding to assist low-income Nova Scotians with diabetes;
- through Nova Scotia's Green Plan, purchased more Crown land and protected more special places;
- completed all items contained in the Provincial Drinking Water Strategy's three year action plan;
- passing the fourth, consecutive balanced budget; and
- reducing Nova Scotia's net direct debt for the first time in many years.

This report demonstrates that concrete action has been taken to either complete or advance the 208 commitments made in the summer of 2003.

In the year ahead, government will continue to move forward on the initiatives outlined in *Blueprint for building a better Nova Scotia.* The following is a review of its many, but not all of the actions, taken to meet the commitments made since the beginning of the government's second mandate on August 18, 2003.

Page numbers noted throughout this document refer to the *Blueprint for building a better Nova Scotia.*

Building Greater Prosperity

"A strong, diverse economy remains a priority."

Commitment

✔ *1. Continue to be a responsible government that lives within its means. (p. 14)*

Action

- Tabled the fourth, consecutive balanced budget in April 2005 - a budget with a $63.3 million surplus. Accelerated Debt Reduction Plan by applying the $830 million received through the Offshore Offset Agreement, as well as $61 million from the budget surplus, toward Nova Scotia's debt.
- Net direct debt to GDP ratio is projected to go down once again - for the fourth year in a row - from 46.8 per cent in 2001-02 to a forecast of 39.6 per cent this year. Foreign currency exposure has dropped from 51 per cent in 1999 to 16.2 per cent.
- Dominion Bond Rating Service moved province's outlook from stable to positive in June 2005, citing the positive effects of applying the $830 million from the Atlantic Accord to the debt, and the agreement with teachers earlier in 2005 to stabilize their pension plan. Moody's Investors Service announced in August 2005 it had changed the province's outlook to positive from stable, also taking into account decision to direct $830 million in offshore revenue from the federal government to debt payment.

Commitment

On-going *2. Ensure that Nova Scotia has the most competitive tax environment in Atlantic Canada. (p. 14)*

Action

- For three years in a row, increased small business tax threshold, saving qualifying businesses as much as $12 million. Effective April 1, 2005, threshold will increase from $300,000 to $350,000, saving Nova Scotia's small businesses an additional $1.25 million this year. On April 1, 2006, the threshold will increase again to $400,000.
- Effective July 2005, large corporation tax was reduced from 0.3 per cent to 0.275 per cent, at a cost of $4.5 million. Over each of the next three years, it will be lowered by another 0.025 per cent annually, reducing it to 0.2 per cent.
- Passed a bill to eliminate the business occupancy tax in response to call from businesses and municipalities. Phase-out to begin April 1st, 2006.
- Budget 2005 contains no new taxes or tax increases.

Commitment

Partial completion.

3. Guarantee the 10% payroll tax deduction takes effect January 1, 2004. (p. 14)

Action

- Only partially achieved. Budget 2004 delivered a full ten per cent tax break to approximately 50 per cent of Nova Scotia taxpayers. Over 90 per cent of taxpayers received all or a portion of the ten per cent tax relief

Commitment

✔

4. Complete the remaining steps in Opportunities for Prosperity, including supporting Nova Scotia's ocean, land and tourism sectors and assisting the continued growth of emerging industries: life sciences, energy, advanced manufacturing and the learning and digital economies. (p.14)

Action

- The five-year-old provincial economic growth strategy is getting an update. Examples of the original strategy's effectiveness include:

  - over 42,600 additional jobs created since July 1999 - 84 percent of those jobs are full-time. In August 2005, 4,900 new jobs were created in Nova Scotia out of 27,500 nationwide. A total of 446,300 Nova Scotians were working in August 2005 - 92.8 per cent of the province's labour force;

  - unemployment rate dropped from 9.6 per cent to 7.2 per cent (the lowest rate since 1976);

  - annual incomes have increased by 13.6 per cent;

  - Nova Scotia held best job creation rate in Canada in 2004; and

  - new strategies have been launched to enhance the number of skilled workers, expand the scope of innovation and protect and sustain Nova Scotia communities.

- Continued work on Opportunities for Prosperity. Since last year, examples of progress include:

  - expanding a lending partnership with the co-op sector expected to help small businesses create nearly 2,000 jobs over the next 10 years, and maintain thousands more. The expansion of the credit union's small business loan guarantee program in July 2005, to $25 million from $6 million, is expected to lead to more than $90 million in small-business loans by 2015.
  - announcement of seven innovative public-private community projects which will bring high-speed Internet to people in 200 more Nova Scotia communities;- government-industry roundtable continuing to make progress on encouraging offshore development in Atlantic Canada; and

Commitment

✔ *5. Extend Nova Scotia's Research and Innovation Trust Fund to continue supporting university and hospital research. (p.14)*

Action

- Budget 2005 invested $5 million in the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust, a provincial funding mechanism set up in 2001 to strengthen research and development capacity. The province has invested more than $28 million in research and development since 2001, resulting in new ideas and technologies that benefit the economy. The provincial investments helped leverage an additional $60-million from national granting councils for research in Nova Scotia.
- Launched $275,000 pilot program to help university and community college researchers prove their concepts to attract more funding and lead to practical benefits for Nova Scotians. The program will make $30,000 available to each of the Nova Scotia universities that wish to participate, as well as the Nova Scotia community college. Six projects already underway at Acadia University and expected to be completed within a year.

Commitment

✔ *6. Continue to expand e-government services/approvals/payments across government and expand the one-stop shopping services offered through Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR) through new negotiated agreements with other levels of government. (p.14)*

Action

- Sending tender information automatically to businesses in Nova Scotia through new on-line notification system (www.gov.ns.ca/SNSMR/NSBR) - Tender Opportunities Notification Service (TONS) - helping educate Nova Scotia businesses about the one billion dollars in public sector contracts.
- Developed a Corporate Portal Strategy to provide web-based access to government services for employees, citizens, businesses and public sector partners. Implementation began with rollout of the employee portal for assessment staff and continued throughout the year for the remainder of department staff.
- Expanding use of licensing services of NSBR by partnering with Environment and Labour to deliver Crane Operators and Power Engineers Licence; exploring partnership opportunities to deliver Fisheries licences and Aquaculture Licence/lease with Agriculture and Fisheries; assisting Environment and Labour to move to three-year licences for Fuel Safety and Elevators/Lifts; exploring other partnership opportunities with Environment and Labour to provide other licencing and/or activity tracking support services on their behalf; and partnering with Economic Development to determine feasibility of using NSBR for Manufacturer's Directory of Goods and Services.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with federal government to pilot its Secure Channel/E-Pass digital certificate service in a continuing effort to ensure the security and privacy of the confidential information Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations maintains.
- Working in partnership with Economic Development and Provincial Libraries, the e-Service Group successfully developed and implemented a new web information service, Government @Your Service. Piloted service within the CAP community in three regions (Sydney, Halifax and Western). Based on a life events model, website provides a wide range of links and access to provincial, federal and municipal services for events such as "Losing Your Wallet"; "Having a Baby or Adopting"; "Starting or Operating a Business"; and "Finding Health Resources". Feedback from the pilot sites was positive, leading to further promotion of the service through 2005-06.

Commitment

✔ 7. Take further action to reduce red tape through a new process to streamline regulatory environment across government and between governments. (p.14)

Action

- Tabled final Red Tape Reduction report September 2004. Since 2000, a task force struck by the Premier met with business leaders and others, leading to the repeal or updating of many laws and regulations. Several boards and commissions were either wound up or merged, while access to public services was expanded.
- Established senior interdepartmental steering committee to take the lead on regulatory reform. Now setting up the Competitiveness and Compliance Office with several projects already underway, including work on approaches to measure regulatory burden, several training events, and a "plain language" review of departmental regulations, policies and guidelines.
- Participating in a Federal/Provincial/Territorial initiative to develop a national Environmental Sustainability Framework designed to provide an integrated national framework (ie: smart regulation approach with optimal use of regulatory and non-regulatory tools, including incentives).
- Continuing with national and regional harmonization initiatives aimed at streamlining regulation in a number of areas including: insurance, pensions, securities, public safety, offshore occupational health and safety, municipal wastewater effluent and environmental assessment.
- Released new land registration system across province as of March 2005, modernizing Nova Scotia's 250-year-old land titles system, linking property records to the land parcel instead of owner's name. System files and stores records electronically instead of through paper-based registry.
- Amended Partnership Act, putting in place regulations that introduce limited liability partnerships to Nova Scotia and permitting certain professionals to be practised in limited liability partnerships, placing Nova Scotia on level footing with other jurisdictions in Canada.
- Amended Personal Property Security Act and put regulations in place to allow consumers to search for liens by serial number; lien owner's name is no longer necessary, enabling government to develop a new on-line Lien Check service offering convenient access for public and businesses.
- Amended Consumer Protection Act to reduce barriers to electronic commerce by increasing consumer protection and harmonizing with other provinces and territories.

- Streamline the regulatory environment through interdepartmental co-operation providing customer access and back-office processing to assist other departments in administration of licence, permit, registration and certification requirements.
- Expanded licences, permits and applications processed through NSBR to include tourist accommodations licences to improve service to tourism operators, streamline the licensing process, reduce red tape, improve compliance rates, and expand government's one-window service offerings, achieving efficiencies in government.
- Included Elevator and Lift Licences and Fixed Roof and Campground Licences with Registry.
- Developed NSBR Data Publishing Tool and implemented for the public to search electronically for driving instructors.
- Business Registration Unit now responsible for the Seniors' Property Tax Rebate program allowing the majority of licences, permits, registrations and certifications processed through the NSBR to be renewed on-line.
- Participated in the Council of the Federation initiative to improve the timelines, certainty and predictability of environmental assessment for projects subject to provincial environmental assessment legislation and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

✔

Commitment

8. Invest in new entrepreneurship training in co-operation with our school boards, community colleges and universities, so Nova Scotia can nurture more homegrown business leaders. (p. 14)

Action

- Committed $200,000 in Budget 2003, 2004, 2005 to Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development to support teacher in-servicing, curriculum renewal, support and promotion to ENT 12.
- Invested in high-value entrepreneur study with St. Mary's University.

✔

Commitment

9. Use the recently signed Provincial Nominee Program as a catalyst for developing a comprehensive immigration policy for Nova Scotia. (p.14)

Action

- Opened the new Office of Immigration and announced the new Minister.
- Passed a bill to enshrine the Office of Immigration into law.
- Launched the new immigration strategy in January 2005 with a goal to raise retention rates from 40 per cent to 70 per cent by 2011, and increase the number of immigrants coming to Nova Scotia from 1,400 to 3,600 immigrants by 2010.
- More than doubled the amount of grant funding available to not-for-profit groups and others providing services for immigrants, including funding for schools boards for second-language training in schools.
- From January 1, 2004 to July 31, 2005, 264 immigrants issued nomination certificates from the province. Nominees themselves have business experience, particular skills (e.g., medical specialists), or strong community ties. Since most of the nominees have families with an average size of four - more than 1,000 newcomers are arriving in our province through the Nominee Program in 2004 and 2005.
- Total immigrants landing in Nova Scotia (through Nominee and federal programs) up to 1700 in 2004, compared to 1475 in 2003.
- Working with service providing organizations, regional development authorities and community groups to support integration services and improve retention rates - Immigration focusing on working with Education (re: labour market needs) and with employers and unions.

In Progress

Commitment

10. Convene a labour relations roundtable - with representatives from the private sector, public sector and organized labour - to discuss ways to improve collective bargaining and to ensure Nova Scotia's labour climate supports a growing economy.

Action

- Held tri-partite labour relations roundtable July 2005, sponsored by Environment and Labour and facilitated by the Canada Labour and Business Centre.

Commitment

✔ *11. Continue to increase the annual business limit under which the small business tax rate applies from $225,000 (03-04) to $300,000 (06-07), saving qualifying small business $11,000 per year. (p.14)*

Action

- Budget 2004 accelerated small business tax relief plan by one year. Increased threshold again to $350,000 in Budget 2005, with a commitment to increase to $400,000 on April 1, 2006.

Commitment

✔ *12. Establish a Small Business Growth Division with Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI). (p.15)*

Action

- Created Small Business Growth Division within NSBI in 2004.

Commitment

In Progress *13. Work with stakeholders to direct a portion of Nova Scotia Funds to Nova Scotia investments. (p.15)*

Action

- Pension funds used to purchase prime Nova Scotia real estate. Additional property investments under consideration.

Commitment

In Progress 14. Increase access to capital by investigating the creation of a capital pool program. (p.15)

Action

- Nova Scotia Securities Commission administers this program through an agreement reached with TSX Venture Exchange - providers of this program. Since March 2005, Nova Scotia companies have been able to access this program locally.

Commitment

✔ *15. Develop an aggressive program to help small businesses bid on government goods and services, including establishing a new Supplier Development Program and providing new outreach services and community workshops on accessing procurement opportunities. (p.15)*

Action

- Supplier Development Program well underway with new investments included in Budget 2005. Highlights of 2004-05 include:
  - five reverse trade shows in various regions, where public sector purchasers answered questions from businesses;
  - creation of a free electronic e-mail service that notifies Nova Scotia vendors when Government issues tenders - Tender Opportunities Notification Service (TONS);
  - directory of contacts in the public sector purchasing field, to make it easier for businesses to reach purchasers;
  - procurement card that reduces paperwork and payment time for small businesses; and
  - new policies respecting out-of-province competition.

  In 2005-06, the program plans include:
  - trade shows in Yarmouth, Truro, Bridgewater, Port Hawkesbury and Halifax;
  - make Nova Scotia products the standard for goods purchased by the Province; and
  - preparation of analysis of what goods and services are purchased outside Nova Scotia so local manufacturers are aware of opportunities.
- Provided an additional $500,000 to help small business access new export markets.

Commitment

In Progress *16. Increase funding for 4Rs program (resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction) of provincial highways by 10 per cent over four years. (p.15)*

Action

- Budget 2005 continued to dedicate all provincial gas tax dollars to transportation. Province expects to spend $50 million more this fiscal year than it predicts will collect in gas taxes on provincial highways.
- Increased capital funding for 4R funding by $6 million, supporting such projects as repaving of sections of Cabot Trail.
- Increased capital funding in 2005 by $30 million for repaving on secondary highways throughout the province. This should result in an additional 120 kms. to 150 kms. roads repaved this year over 2004.

Commitment

In Progress

17. Implement a multi-year plan to expand Nova Scotia's 100-series highway system to improve safety, expand capacity and stimulate economic growth. (p.15)

Action

- Budget 2004 and 2005 dedicated tens of millions of gas tax dollars to major work on such highways as the 101, 102, 103, 104 and 125.
- 2004-05 highlights included:
  - Continued construction on several major highways, including the 103, the 104 and the 125.
  - $20 million for work on Highway 103, near Halifax, to upgrade 19 kilometres of Highway 103 to four lanes.
  - On Highway 111, the province worked with HRM on a $2 million project to improve traffic flow across Lake MicMac and reduce traffic congestion heading into MicMac Mall and the surrounding neighbourhoods.
  - About $2 million was spent on repaving and bridge repairs from Stillwater to Newport Station on Highway 101.
  - A new interchange is under construction at Coxheath and the Sydney River Bridge is being widened as part of the Highway 125 project; and $3.3 million on Highway 105.

Commitment

In Progress

18. Double the funding for rural road improvements through the Road Improvement Money (RIM) program, from $10 million to $20 million by year four. (p.15)

Action

- Budget 2004 and 2005 each provided an additional $2.5 million for RIM, bringing the total to $15 million to support further highway maintenance on Nova Scotia's rural roads, such as asphalt patching, ditching and gravelling, shoulder repairs, and brush cutting.

Commitment

In Progress

19. Implement a five-year, $50-million Steel Truss Bridge Replacement Program. (p.15)

Action

- Budget 2004 committed $9 million to the multi-year, bridge replacement program, supporting designs of up to ten bridges and construction of seven.
- In the third of a five-year program, Budget 2005 invested $13 million. Design and tendering for this year's projects continues.

Commitment

In Progress

20. Legislate and co-operatively fund a new Capital District Transportation Authority in consultation with the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to resolve the growing traffic/transportation-related problems resulting from HRM's growing population. (p.15)

Action

- Proceeding with implementation of a Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee in conjunction with Transportation and Public Works and the HRM, with participation from other key stakeholders.

Commitment

In Progress

21. Implement a comprehensive Salt Management Strategy to reduce the impact on the environment and achieve cost efficiencies. (p.15)

Action

- Approved Salt Management Plan and developed Best Management practices.

Commitment

✔

22. Continue to press the federal government to establish a long-term national transportation strategy that allocates a greater share of federal gas tax dollars to Nova Scotia highways. (p.15)

Action

- Met with Federal Transportation Minister August 2005 to seek a better deal on highway funding.
- Continue to negotiate new highway agreement with Federal government. Minister made personal appeal to Federal counterpart in August 2005 for more highway funding. Both governments expect to sign an agreement this fall to cost-share twinning projects on Highways 101 and 104 calling for each government to contribute $30.5 million, with Nova Scotia picking up all additional costs to complete the projects. Premier lobbied for Federal government to return a greater share of gas taxes to provinces at Annual Premiers' Conference August 2005.
- Canada's premiers announced in August 2005 their decision to develop a national transportation strategy. Premier Hamm, along with British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell and Joseph Handley of the Northwest Territories, will lead the development of the strategy. Reinvestment of federal fuel taxes will be an integral part of a sustainable, long-term strategy.

Commitment

In Progress *23. Support the growth of the Halifax International Airport, in concert with promoting complementary cargo and passenger opportunities for smaller Nova Scotia airports, such as Yarmouth and Sydney. (p.15)*

Commitment

In Progress *24. Urge the federal government to return a greater share of the net profit it earns from Nova Scotia airport fees to the province's airport. (p.15)*

Action

- Worked with the Halifax International Airport Authority and secured US pre-clearance rights for the airport - to be operational by October 2006.
- Worked with Yarmouth and Sydney airports to identify and pursue the federal regulatory and policy environment necessary for long-term viability. A joint federal/provincial/territorial task force looking at developing options to address viability concerns of small airports.
- Minister met with Federal Transport Minister August 2005 and discussed the financial difficulties of small airports. Also discussed the high cost of service to passengers flying in and out of Sydney. Federal Minister agreed to pursue issue with Air Canada.
- Tourism, Culture and Heritage partnered with Halifax International Airport Authority to increase domestic and international air capacity into Nova Scotia from core and emerging tourism markets. Also partnered on marketing initiatives with air carriers to promote inbound travel to the province, such as Canadian Affair, Air Transat's new Frankfurt-Halifax link, and Zoom's new Manchester-Halifax link.

Commitment

In Progress *25. Work with Canadian National, Via Rail Canada, as well as current and potential short-line operators, to identify new business cases for expanding freight and passenger rail service. (p.15)*

Action

- Signed five-year, $10-million agreement with Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway Ltd. September 2005 guaranteeing operations between St. Peter's Junction and Sydney.
- Budget 2005 provided $1.5 million to ensure Cape Breton's only commercial rail link to the mainland remains in operation.
- Provided railway contact information and film location suggestions to Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation. May be opportunities for the Windsor and Hantsport Railway. Also met with VIA Rail July 2005 to identify and discuss opportunities.

Commitment

On-going

26. Urge the federal government to improve the competitiveness of major transportation assets, such as the Port of Halifax, through such ways as allowing major Canadian ports to issue tax-exempt bonds to raise capital for infrastructure improvements. (p.15)

Action

- Completed Rail Service Optimization study May 2004. Provided information throughout process.
- New mandate of Waterfront Development Corporation will ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach is applied to provincial lands around Halifax Harbour, an important economic resource.
- Reviewing potential benefits of Bill C-41, the *Canada Marine Act*, for Port Authorities, including Halifax. The bill was introduced in federal parliament June 2005. Province provided input prior to the introduction of the legislation.
- Continuing with Smart Port meetings on regular basis.

Commitment

On-going

27. Continue to press the federal Minister of Transport to establish a permanent, long-term fund to address the capital needs of smaller ports, such as Sydney, Sheet Harbour, Yarmouth, Shelburne, Digby, Pictou and the Strait of Canso. (p.16)

Action

- Lobbied for capital needs of small ports. Transport Canada responded through a capital funding program for port security - Marine Facility Security Contribution Program - announced April 2004. Program runs for three years, providing funding on a cost-shared basis to enhance marine security. Twelve Nova Scotia projects announced March 2005.

Commitment

✔ *28. Make a multi-year commitment to Brand Nova Scotia (minimum of $700,000/year), to aggressively promote our products at home and abroad, increase procurement opportunities for local companies, and attract skilled expatriates/immigrants to our province. (p.16)*

Action

- Launched Brand Nova Scotia as the new visual identity for Nova Scotia.
- Budget 2005 supported *Come to Life* brand initiative with $2.5 million.
- Signed the first Come to Life campaign charter in June 2005 with three Nova Scotia companies: The Halifax International Airport Authority, Scotia Slate, Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association.
- Continued roll-out of broad-based brand program within all government departments and agencies.
- Premier and minister have had discussions to urge their Atlantic counterparts to commit to increasing local beef purchases at government-owned facilities. Atlantic Premiers agreed at their June 2005 meeting to direct their ministers responsible for the food sector to work with industry stakeholders to identify opportunities to promote consumption of locally-produced goods in the region. In discussions with industry, public sector buyers and producers to find ways to access local products. An initial tender issued for beef, on behalf of Nova Scotia Health Purchasing, to be awarded September 2005.
- Made change to Procurement Policy to allow preference for purchases of goods under $5,000 manufactured or produced in Nova Scotia.
- Continued work to identify branding opportunities that leverage the tourism, culture and heritage sectors.
- Initiated development of the Local Heroes advertising program, a framework for the Nova Scotia friends database, a web strategy, and an expatriate program.

Commitment

✔ *29. Increase funding for the Business Retention and Expansion Program to ensure businesses stay and grow in Nova Scotia, with special attention to promoting Nova Scotia's agricultural and fish products. (p.16)*

Action

- Supplier Development Program launched.
- Created Small Business Growth Division with NSBI.
- Provided funds to the Greater Halifax Partnership to support its Smart Business Initiative. Working with the N.S. Regional Development Authority.
- Bowlby Quality Meats granted $200,000 loan in 2004 to expand sales of beef raised in the Valley and create 20 new jobs.
- Provided $1.5-million innovation incentive to Apple Valley Foods to help the company expand and strengthen markets in Canada and U.S. over the next five years. Expansion expected to increase annual sales by 50 per cent and to create up to 35 additional jobs over the next five years.
- Renewed, for five years, the $1.5-million prototype boat credit facility loan program for the boat building industry to create new vessels for export, recreation and the fishery.

Commitment

In Progress *30. Work with other governments to review securities regulations to provide more flexibility for the private sector, especially small businesses. (p.16)*

Action

- Participated in on-going intergovernmental discussions about alternative regulatory harmonization options - i.e. establishment of a single national regulator with provincial participation, or enhancement of the current model by introducing a passport system.
- Joined with 12 other provinces and territories in 2005 signing MOU for the Passport System to allow registrants to deal with one jurisdiction as their principal regulator. Compliance with principal regulator would mean compliance with all others. Passed legislation to enable the passport system and to enhance the inspection and compliance provisions under the Act. Ministers responsible for Securities looking at further harmonization of securities rules in 2006.
- Established new rules to bring predictability to organizations trying to raise capital in Nova Scotia, requiring more stringent technical standards for audits of financial statements and putting Nova Scotia on a level playing field with all other provinces for disclosure of financial information requirements.

✘

Commitment

31. Introduce Fair is Fair legislation to ensure Nova Scotia business and Nova Scotia workers are provided a level playing field when governments in other jurisdictions unfairly restrict opportunities in their province. (p.16)

Action

- Incomplete.

In Progress

Commitment

32. Work together with community stakeholders to preserve the existing runway infrastructure at CFB Shearwater presently under the control of National Defence. With the infrastructure secured, develop a strategic plan to use Shearwater as a centre for the future growth of Nova Scotia's aerospace industry. (p.16)

Action

- In discussion with the federal government with several options offering opportunities for Nova Scotia on the table.
- Continued to work with the community to support efforts to protect the valuable infrastructure at Shearwater.

In Progress

Commitment

33. Continue to press Ottawa to ensure Nova Scotia aerospace and advanced manufacturing companies receive a fair share of federal procurement opportunities. (p.16)

Action

- Hired corporate strategist to carry project forward.
- Canadian Aerospace Partnership was formed with membership of federal government, five provinces, industry, labour and academia. Economic Development Minister representing Nova Scotia.
- Promoted Nova Scotia's aerospace and advanced manufacturing capabilities to major contractors significant to Nova Scotia. This included a meeting, led by the Premier, with the Boeing Company, and a meeting with Airbus - both in the spring of 2004.
- Explored opportunities for Nova Scotia companies through meetings with the Aerospace Industry Association of Canada, relevant federal government departments, and other stakeholders.
- Nova Scotia aerospace and defence firms, along with Economic Development Minister, met with major players in the industry during the Paris Air Show June 2005, showcasing advantages of doing business with Atlantic Canada.

Commitment

In Progress

34. Establish a Community Development Policy to help ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of Nova Scotia's communities, particularly smaller, rural communities, based on the advice gained through the Premier's Forum on Rural Issues and subsequent community consultations. (p.16)

Action

- Established an interdepartmental Community Development Advisory Group to prepare a policy defining government's role in helping communities increase their sustainability.
- Public discussion paper released Fall 2003 - consulted with stakeholders in over 20 communities across the province, providing an opportunity for direct community input to the policy development process.
- Executive Council adopted new community development policy Spring 2005.
- Budget 2005 invested an additional $200,000 to advance strategy to promote community development.

Commitment

✔

35. Guarantee long-term financial support for the province's 13 Regional Development Authorities (RDAs). (p.16)

Action

- Signed a new memorandum of understanding with RDA umbrella organization, the Nova Scotia Association of RDAs, formally recognizing the relationship between the province and the association through shared community development objectives and philosophies.
- Committed $1.75 million to RDAs in Budget 2004.
- Budget 2005 invested an additional $350,000 in core funding to RDAs across the province.

Commitment

In Progress

36. Establish a Provincial Capital Commission to protect our provincial capital's valuable heritage sites and maximize the public benefit of provincially-owned properties. (p.16)

Action

- Working with Nova Scotia Heritage Federation to establish new Provincial Heritage Strategy.

Commitment

✘

37. Cost-share, in conjunction with the municipalities, federal government and private sector a Main Street Program to help smaller communities improve their business centres. (p.16)

Action

- Incomplete.

Commitment

✔ *38. Guarantee minimum, one-month processing time for small production companies eligible for Nova Scotia's Film Development Tax Credit. (p.17)*

Action

- Increased and extended the film industry tax credit to 2016 in Budget 2005.
- Reduced processing time to approximately one month to six weeks from time of application for credit.

Commitment

✔ *39. Establish and fund Nova Scotia's first Music Strategy in consultation with the Music Industry Association of Nova Scotia (MIANS), including developing new marketing and export opportunities that highlight Nova Scotia's musical talent. (p.17)*

Action

- Committed $3 million over four years in support of Nova Scotia's first Music Sector Strategy, with an annual $750,000 investment. The Emerging Music Business Program and the Export Development Program for Music were developed in partnership with MIANS.
- "Bringin' it home! Nova Scotia Music - on Tour" program, administered by MIANS recently completed its second year at an annual commitment of $150,000, involving both established artists and rising stars.
- Initiated on-going meetings with MIANS to develop performance measures for music industry strategy.

Commitment

In Progress *40. Develop, in partnership with the Tourism Partnership Council and the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, a Signature Attractions Program. (p.17)*

Action

- Continued support of the Atlantic Canada Signature Attractions Program and supported the Tourism Partnership Council's product development efforts on new signature tourism attractions ("Star Generators") in Nova Scotia including new investments planned for Peggy's Cove, Joggins Fossil Cliffs, and the Cabot Trail.

Commitment

Amended

41. Establish a new Nova Scotia Book Publishers Tax Credit and launch a new industry growth program for Nova Scotia Book publishers. (p.17)

Action

- Worked with publishers to redesign an existing $86,000 investment program focusing more on supporting new writers and increasing sales revenues.
- Increased, by 58 per cent, the annual funding already provided, for an additional $50,000 in support, ie: transferred the $50,000 from the proposed tax credit to direct funding for the Publishing Investment Program.
- Redesigned support program will soon make it easier for book publishers in Nova Scotia to grow and expand, providing publishers with the flexibility to continue developing the local market, while expanding into new markets.

Commitment

In Progress

42. Examine, in co-operation with other levels of government and key stakeholders, the feasibility of creating a Nova Scotia Celebration Centre to promote Halifax as a port of call. Centre would highlight Nova Scotia's heritage and culture, its innovation, musical and artist talent.

Action

- Feasibility study undertaken by Nova Society.

Commitment

✔

43. Work with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) and Tourism Partnership Council (TPC) to increase the value of tourism, including more support for off-season marketing. (p.17)

Action

- Worked closely with the Council to plan and execute the annual tourism plan - the signature plan for tourism, including "Right Here Right Now" marketing campaign, recipient of the national award for Best Tourism Marketing Campaign in 2003. Launched a new Fall/Winter marketing campaign and developed a new Northeast U.S. marketing strategy in 2004-05.
- Presented long-term marketing plan and 2005 Tourism Plan to industry December 2004. Implementation of $10 million strategic new investment in tourism, including incremental marketing in core markets, is complete.
- TPC, in partnership with TIANS, developed a marketing strategy. Agency of Record has been contracted to secure marketing services and expertise to assist in the 2004, 2005, and 2006 tourism marketing campaigns.

Commitment

✔ *44. Support a variety of new attractions, including developing an application for UNESCO World Heritage designations for Joggins and Grand Pré, conducting a feasibility study for expanding the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on the Halifax waterfront, and increasing promotional support for the Bay of Fundy region. (p.17)*

Action

- Supported inclusion of Joggins and Grand Pré sites on Canada's tentative list of sites to be put forward to UNESCO as potential world heritage sites. Joggins and Grand Pré successfully nominated as two of only eleven Canadian sites considered for potential designation. (Parks Canada administers World Heritage program in Canada, which has a "tentative list" of potential sites from which it annually selects no more than one for submission to UNESCO. Joggins is now designated as #2 on the country's priority list.) Natural Resources has developed scientific case in support of the proposal and will continue to support the nomination of this exceptional, natural site.
- Invested $1.1 million in 2004-05 to support site enhancements to the Joggins Fossil Cliffs. Staff continue to work with the local community to manage the site and prepare a nomination dossier for UNESCO consideration in 2006. In partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia continues to support the Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership. This includes specific product development and marketing initiatives to enhance the Bay of Fundy tourism experience.
- Awarded feasibility study contract for expanding the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on the Halifax waterfront. As part of the study, a series of stakeholder consultations was held in April-May 2005. Broad public consultations planned for Fall 2005.

Commitment

✔ *45. Implement changes to the Accommodations Act and regulations to reduce the red tape burden on small tourism operators. (p.17)*

Action

- Changed regulations for the Tourist Accommodations Act in October 2003, establishing a partnership with Service Nova Scotia to process Tourist Accommodations licences and streamline the licensing process.
- Expanded licences, permits and applications processed through NSBR to include tourist accommodations licences to improve service to tourism operators, streamline licensing process, reduce red tape, improve compliance rates, and expand government's one-window service offerings, achieving efficiencies in government.

✔

Commitment

46. Building on the anticipated success of the 2004 Congrès mondial acadien, work with all Nova Scotia communities, including First Nations, to promote the 400th anniversary of permanent European settlement in our province for the year 2005. (p.17)

Action

- Contributed more than $225,000 to support the planning, development and promotion of the 400th anniversary of the landing at Port Royal - a year-long anniversary celebration highlighted as a "signature event" for 2005. Many Nova Scotians of First Nation, French, British and Scottish descent can trace their ancestry back to this area of the province 400 years ago. Held daily events July and August 2005.
- Bear River First Nation Chief Frank Meuse and Council involved in the planning of event and participated in anniversary.
- Featured event on this year's Festivals and Events Guide cover and figures prominently in Nova Scotia's local, national and international tourism marketing campaigns.
- Worked with Focus 2005 - a partnership involving Municipality of Annapolis, Towns of Annapolis Royal, Bridgetown and Middleton, and a number of non-profit organizations - to promote and market the anniversary of permanent European settlement in Nova Scotia.

In Progress

Commitment

47. Adopt a new Energy Act, to help make the business climate more efficient and encourage more offshore exploration. (p.17)

Action

- Developing an Energy Act to consolidate existing legislation and modernize provincial approach. Engaged technical advice on legislation and regulations that would fall under the new Act.
- Energy and Halifax Regional Municipality signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) August 2005 with Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University and the Capital District Health Authority to move forward with the next phase of a Community Energy Project. The project would involve construction of a natural gas-fired combined heat and electrical power plant on peninsula Halifax. Waste energy from the plant would be utilized to provide heat to the universities and hospitals through an underground distribution system. District energy systems are important for addressing energy security issues for vital infrastructure, such as hospitals, by adding more fuel flexibility.

Commitment

In Progress *48. Work with the Offshore/Onshore Technologies Association of Nova Scotia (OTANS) and Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) to establish a joint Nova Scotia Oil and Gas Business Registry aimed at achieving local benefits and attracting new business opportunities. (p.17)*

Action

- Developed contact database for companies with a base of operations in the province. Database continues to be updated.
- Working closely with OTANS to attract new business opportunities for local industry. Recently, Province and OTANS jointly led a delegation of 31 Nova Scotian companies to the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston. Also partnering on Offshore Europe in Aberdeen September 2005 along with various trade missions to Alberta, Mexico, Trinidad and other prime markets for Nova Scotian expertise.

Commitment

✔ 49. Work with industry to establish the Energy Futures Scholarships for high school, community college and university students studying in the oil and gas sciences and related fields. *(p.17)*

Action

- Launched Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship program March 2005. The $2-million scholarship fund is a partnership between the province ($500,000) and Pengrowth Corporation, one of the owners of the Sable Offshore Energy Project, for those students looking for a career in the energy sector. The fund should yield about $200,000 annually to be allocated in scholarships and grants.

Commitment

In Progress 50. Increase Nova Scotia's competitiveness in the energy industry through the Offshore Oil and Gas Issues Steering Committee to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Atlantic regulatory regime. *(p.18)*

In Progress *51. Continue to aggressively work with other governments and industry through the Offshore Oil and Gas Issues Steering Committee to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Atlantic regulatory regime. (p.18)*

Action

- Signed a new federal-provincial agreement in February 2005 to encourage more offshore petroleum development by improving regulatory efficiency so that approval times are comparable with rest of the world. The agreement - developed through Atlantic Energy Roundtable - means all regulators will examine applications at the same time.
- Budget 2005 dedicated $500,000 to step up efforts to encourage offshore oil and gas development.

Commitment

✔ 52. *Continue to press Ottawa to honour its commitment to make Nova Scotia the principal beneficiary of its offshore resources, through the federal-provincial review of the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Accord and the 1988 Agreement Act. (p.18)*

Action

- On February 14, 2005, the Premier and Prime Minister witnessed the signing of a new Offshore Revenues Agreement making the long-standing commitment a reality and ensuring that Nova Scotians are the beneficiaries of 100 percent of their offshore resources.
- Received $830-million, up-front payment from Ottawa in June 2005.

Commitment

✔ *53. Promote the use of clean, alternative energy by using Crown land for wind energy projects. (p.18)*

Action

- Passed Renewable Portfolio Standard legislation in 2004 to require Nova Scotia Power to meet a minimum target of new electricity generation from renewable sources, such as wind. When fully phased in, the new law will guarantee a market for approximately 200 MW of new renewable based electricity production. Drafting new electricity regulations to allow renewable-based electricity generators to sell directly to retail customers.
- Established target of 50 MW of new renewable electricity generation capacity.
- There are now 19 utility-scale wind turbines generating electricity in Nova Scotia. In Fall 2004, Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) approved 15 wind energy projects with a collective capacity of 25 megawatts. In 2005, NSPI approved a 12 MW project for Lingan and a 30 MW project for Amherst. This brings NSPI's overall wind power commitment to 100 MW.
- Helped sponsor wind energy conference for more than 100 business and community leaders November 2004 to learn how to set up a successful wind energy project.
- Contributed $60,000 to a research project on tidal flow power.

Commitment

In Progress

54. Continue to support research into the impact on seismic testing on marine life. (p.18)

Action

- Released a draft Statement of Canadian Seismic Practice at the Atlantic Energy Roundtable meeting Fall 2004, in collaboration with federal government departments, the provinces of BC and Newfoundland and Labrador. The intent: formalize and standardize the mitigation measures in Canada on the conduct of seismic surveys in the marine environment.
- Participated August 2005 in international workshop on industry-led efforts to close science gaps and develop new technology.
- Continue to lead efforts to co-ordinate Canadian and international research programs and technology developments with the goal of accessing international and national funding to address seismic and other marine sound issues in the Nova Scotia offshore.
- Provided over $40,000 for collaborative program conducted by Corridor Resources Inc. for DFO and Area 19 snow crab fishermen to research short and long-term impacts to snow crab from seismic testing in Cape Breton offshore. Results published in Fall 2004.
- Contributed $50,000 toward DFO project to better understand acoustic impacts of seismic activities and propagation in the Sable Gully area.
- Continued to support and collaborate with the Centre for Offshore Oil and Gas Environmental Research (COOGER) of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in researching seismic impacts.

Commitment

✔ *55. Continue to work with organizations like Clean Nova Scotia and the Ecology Action Centre on conservation and efficiency programs. (p.18)*

Action

- Invested an additional $1.2 million through Budget 2005 to advance new climate change initiatives and to fund a new Energy Efficient Housing Program.
- Partnered with Clean Nova Scotia, the Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Homebuilders Association and other agencies on 2004 R2000 home showcase; industry training on energy efficient construction techniques; energy efficient home retrofit seminars; anti-idling campaign; university bus pass project; HRM Metro Transit rapid transit showcase; support for national 'EnerGuide for Houses' program in Nova Scotia; and consultant study on promoting use of geothermal energy in Springhill.
- Providing information to staff through a sustainable transportation committee to encourage alternate forms of transportation. Working with non-governmental organizations to implement various initiatives, such as working with Ecology Action Centre (TRAX) to integrate sustainable transportation in the workplace. Initiatives include: information sessions to promote carpooling, an employee transportation survey, purchase of a fleet bicycle, participation in Bike to Work Week and the Canadian Commuter Challenge, distribution of promotional materials on sustainable transportation, purchase of bus transport tickets in the workplace, and potential lease of a hybrid vehicle for departmental use.
- Working with environmental organizations. In Summer 2005, Youth Conservation Corps worked with Clean Nova Scotia on reducing toxic household chemicals, water conservation and septic system maintenance, Ecology Action Centre on sustainable transportation and the Sierra Club on building energy audits.
- Working with Clean Nova Scotia on Septic System Education for Homeowners program, reaching through Kingswood Subdivision in Phase I. Phase II extended to residents of Fall River, Waverley, Lake Fletcher, and Windsor Junction in 2004. Phase III, targeting approximately 150-300 homeowners throughout the Municipality of Kings County, currently underway.

Commitment

In Progress

56. Increase research and development efforts, in concert with the private sector and post- secondary institutions, on the challenges and opportunities in Nova Scotia's energy sector. (p.18)

Action

- Working to create Nova Scotia Energy Research and Development Network to link those with energy-related research interests in the province and serve as a communications tool to keep participants connected.
- Brought together more than 200 representatives of industry, government and academia at Nova Scotia Energy 2004 Research & Development Forum in May 2004 to discuss energy sector research and ways to coordinate R & D capabilities.
- Took part in research initiative to send Nova Scotia Delegation to Norway and Scotland in October 2003 to gain understanding on the relationship between the fishing and offshore oil and gas industries in the North Sea. Documented information gathered in The North Sea Oil & Gas and Fisheries Report.
- Nova Scotia Energy Research Website and Database is online and continually updated, providing a wide range of information related to energy R&D.

Commitment

✔

57. Work with the Federation of Agriculture to launch an aggressive campaign to promote farming as a valued career choice. (p.18)

Action

- Nova Scotia Agricultural Awareness Committee, in cooperation with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, working to educate the public and students in school about the many opportunities available in agriculture through programs such as:
  - Offered Grade 11 Agriculture/Agri-Foods course in 14 per cent of high schools and Ag Zone, an annual science enrichment program for Grades 4-6 students/teachers, at Nova Scotia's Agricultural College.
  - Distributed to all schools in province Growing Nova Scotia - A Teacher's Guide to Agricultural Education, profiling agriculture, including a careers section and activities.
  -Public awareness programs and Ag in the Classroom programs profile farms and farmers to show that education, innovation and versatility are needed to work in the field today.

Commitment

✔ *58. Establish Farm Growth Planning, a new program to assist farmers who develop 3 to 5 year business plans with the technical and financial assistance they need to support better farming practices and increased production. Program will allow for assessment and funding for a specified range of supports based on individual farm needs. (p.18)*

Action

- Entered into the Canada-Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) April 2003 to provide a program structure with funding programs leading to growth and development of Nova Scotia farms. Under the Renewal pillar of the APF, Nova Scotia producers may receive funding under the Canadian Farm Business Advisory Service providing business planning and consultation to farmers.

  APF Renewal Management initiatives include:
  - Canadian Farm Business Advisory Service;
  - Specialized Business Planning Services;
  - Planning and Support for Valued-Added Enterprises;
  - Skills Development Initiative;
  - Canadian Agricultural Skills Services Program; and
  - New Opportunities Business Development and Investment Initiative.

Commitment

✔ *59. Continue to support Nova Scotia farmers through income risk stabilization programs and provide investment assistance, such as credit and financial services through the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board. (p.18)*

Action

- Continued business risk management programs, including Production Insurance and the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) programs, to support Nova Scotia farmers.
- Provided annual funding of approximately $3.6 million through the Farm Investment Fund and the Agri-Food Industry Development Fund.
- Supported the organizational development and industry development of the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers Association with half a million dollars April 2005.
- Invested an additional $8.1 million to producers in 2004-05 through the Ruminant Income Support Program (RISP). Farm Loan Board continues to provide lending services to farming community.
- Continued to support the hog industry through a loan program administered through Pork Nova Scotia. Producers now have until March 31, 2007 to take advantage of the program, following an extension granted August 2005.

Commitment

✔ *60. Provide increased support for farmers in identifying new business opportunities both at home and abroad, including dedicating resources within the Business Retention and Expansion Program offered through Nova Scotia Business Inc. (p.18)*

Action

- NSBI and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries are working on strategic initiatives including trade, planning and individual client business counselling.
- Completed study to research the Nova Scotia food supply chain for provincially-owned institutions and facilities in November 2004. The study was initiated to identify food products used, criteria for selection, and possible opportunities for local suppliers to compete for the business.
- Pursued specific opportunities in partnership with industry in local, domestic and international venues for the public sector use of local food products.
- Participated with Trade Team Nova Scotia on provincial trade strategy.
- Conducted series of business roundtables targeted to the farming community.

Commitment

✔ *61. Work with the Federation of Agriculture to help Nova Scotia producers maximize their market share by increasing awareness of Nova Scotia-grown fresh and processed agricultural products as part of Brand Nova Scotia. (p.18)*

Action

- Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association is one of the first three organizations to sign the *Come to Life* campaign charter - pledging to promote Nova Scotia and its attributes wherever it does business. The objective of the campaign is to show the world that Nova Scotia is a wonderful place to work, raise a family, and enjoy life.
- Completed a Nova Scotia Beef Marketing Campaign through Brand Nova Scotia, in conjunction with Nova Scotia Cattle Producers Association.
- Worked with Nova Scotia Fruit Growers on 'Annapolis Valley Original' consumer promotion and branding initiative.
- Continued to support local agri-food producers and processors through Taste of Nova Scotia Quality Food and Taste of Nova Scotia Restaurant programs with marketing and development.
- Discussed Atlantic-based consumer research study on attitudes and practices towards local food processors to help guide future branding direction at June 2005 Council of Atlantic Premiers meeting.
- Representatives of the apple industry from Eastern Canada and the United States met in Fall 2004, agreeing to strengthen collaborative efforts at marketing, research and technical services to help improve the competitiveness of the Northeastern apple industry.

Commitment

✔ *62. Promote growth in the fishery sector by advancing product quality and value-added production through marketing and trade services. (p.18)*

Action

- Budget 2005 invested additional funds to establish a new Atlantic Bioresource TechnoVenture Centre to develop value-added and non-traditional food and bioscience products. Centre will receive $250,000/year for three years to help enhance the health and well-being of humans and animals through the development of new products. CEO announced July 2005.
- Announced in August 2005 investment of $250,000 for the development program for the salt fish industry to create new marketing initiatives and to support product development to help add value to the industry.
- Invested in Ocean Nutrition Canada to establish a large-scale, manufacturing facility in Dartmouth for its micro-encapsulated Omega 3 fish oil powder that will help secure the future of a world-class bio-tech company and potentially create over 500 new jobs.
- Continued to fund product and quality development program with leveraged funding from government and industry stakeholders with $150,000/year.
- Developed a government/industry committee to steer competitive analysis research and recommendations. Undertaking a study to benchmark the competitiveness of the seafood sector. RFP for the study out to tender. Committee also working with industry to develop a marketing plan for haddock.
- Investigating processing initiatives, such as MAP (Modified Atmosphere Packaging), to assist the seafood industry in advancing its technology processing capabilities.
- Exploring new marketing avenues for the shellfish industry to identify value-added opportunities, eg. existing shellfish companies are investigating processing of under- utilized species for the export market.

Commitment

✔ *63. Continue to press the federal government for a fair share of marine resource allocations for Nova Scotia fishermen. (p.18)*

Action

- Minister's Council/Conference provided opportunities to receive input and guidance directly from industry on future management discussions such as conservation, allocation, processing, and interactions with other industries, such as oil and gas.
- Held Federal-Provincial Inter-Jurisdictional Accord review during 2003, co-chaired by the federal government and Nova Scotia. Changes identified in the review are being implemented in 2005, including development of a strategy to promote the principles and objectives of the Inter-jurisdictional Accord throughout federal and provincial departments and establishing a fixed date review clause in new Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM) agreements to ensure that policy decisions are implemented at the operational level.
- Attended regional and inter-regional meetings where marine fish management plans are developed and fish allocations decided covering all species from groundfish, to pelagic, and shellfish. Representations made on issues such as timing of seasonal openings for crab - aimed at extending the length of the onshore processing season in Nova Scotia.
- Held discussions with Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador to gain fairer access for Nova Scotia fish processors to unprocessed fish species from those provinces. As Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador refused to drop their trade restrictions on unprocessed fish, Nova Scotia continues to pursue open trade in fish in Atlantic Canada.
- Developed management strategies for pelagic species, such as herring, mackerel, tuna and groundfish species, with fishermen and Ottawa.
- Participated on federal/provincial Atlantic cod recovery team. Working with DFO on strategies for stock rebuilding with a focus on Gulf of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Eastern Scotian Shelf recovery.

Commitment

In Progress *64. Implement new Code of Forest Practices. (p.19)*

Action

- Released the first component of a Code of Forest Practice, *A Framework for the Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management*, as part of an on-going process for implementing a comprehensive forest strategy for Nova Scotia. Provides general principles that will form the basis of sustainable forest practices to be mandatory on Crown land, and recommended for use on private lands.
- Completed initial internal drafts of the Ecosystem Management, Forest Products, Integrated Resource Use, and Wildlife Habitat guidebook, which are the Code's second component, August 2005.

Commitment

In Progress *65. Enhance Nova Scotia's Forestry Strategy by working with industry and interested stakeholders, starting with the release of the first Annual State of the Forests Report. (p.19)*

Action

- Preparation of background and supporting material for the report underway.

Commitment

In Progress *66. Create a New Growth program for Nova Scotia hardwood value-added products. (p.18)*

Action

- Approved policy for allocation of hardwood on unencumbered Crown land April 2003.
- Entered into partnership agreement with Forintek Canada Corp. to provide information and advice on new technologies and innovations to the province's solid wood industry June 2004.

Commitment

✔ *67. Complete negotiations with the federal government for the transfer of Devco coal leases to the province and begin tendering for new private sector development of the coal reserves, including those in the Donkin resource block. (p.18)*

Action

- Accepted surrender of coal leases July 2003.
- Issued tenders for the first four surface coal resources December 2003. Tender closed March 2004. Three companies were awarded right to apply for mineral rights. Approved a special coal lease for one company and an exploration licence for another company.
- Issued call for proposals to explore and develop Donkin coal resource block in the Sydney coalfield December 2004. Tender closed March 2005. Three submissions received and evaluated.

Commitment

✗ *68. Establish a tax credit for qualified mineral exploration to encourage responsible expenses related to flow-through shares. (p.19)*

Action

- Incomplete. Federal government did not extend its Investment Tax Credit for Exploration in its 2005 Budget. The creation of a provincial tax credit was intended to supplement the federal tax credit. Province is represented on a national working group analyzing mineral taxation issues.

Commitment

In Progress *69. Undertake additional changes to the Mineral Resources Act to improve the management and administration of the province's mineral resources. (p.19)*

In Progress *70. Develop, in co-operation with the Office of Economic Development, a Mineral Development strategy that will include a co-ordinated "one window" process for providing scientific, technical and policy information. (p.19)*

Action

- Approved preparation of a renewed Mineral Strategy. Work proceeding.
- Started work on a mineral sector economic impact study to provide background information for the strategy.

Better. Faster Health Care. Healthier Nova Scotians.

"Government will continue to build on the significant progress made over the last four years to make sure Nova Scotians get the care they need when they need it. This plan will see Nova Scotians go from being amongst the least healthy people in Canada to a model of health and fitness."

In Progress

Commitment

71. Add at least 350 more nurses to our health system. (p.24)

Action

- In 2004, added 127 LPNs and 357 new RNs to the health system.
- In 2004, 145 more nurses (RNs and LPNs) were employed than in 2003. Of these, 102 were employed in regular (vs. casual) positions.
- Significantly more nurses are graduating and staying in Nova Scotia. Of the 357 new RNs, 203 were new graduates. Over 78 per cent of new graduates are retained, almost 90 percent of whom find full-time employment in the province within the first year of graduation.
- Supported recruitment with relocation allowance, job fairs, student co-op programs, RN & LPN re-entry funding and recruitment websites.

✔

Commitment

72. Continue to work with the Nova Scotia Nursing Network and fund Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy by at least $5.2 M in each of the next four years ($20.8 M). (p.24)

Action

- Between the years 2001 and 2006, almost $60 million will have been invested to support the strategy to assist with recruitment, retention and renewal initiatives, including nursing bursaries, funding for continuing education and leadership development.
- Budget 2005 added an additional $300,000 to enhance nursing recruitment in rural communities, including marketing nursing opportunities in rural communities, funding opportunities for undergraduate nursing students in rural areas and enhancing continuing education opportunities for existing LPNs and RNs in rural areas.
- In 2003-04, nursing strategy's relocation allowance assisted 113 nurses from across Canada, the United States and other countries relocate to work in the province.

Commitment

In Progress *73. Secure at least 100 more doctors through additional training and recruitment. (p.25)*

Action

- Since 2002, achieved target of securing at least 100 more doctors through additional training and recruitment. In each of the last five years, Nova Scotia has experienced a net growth rate in physician numbers.
- Since April 2004 alone, 49 new physicians (four family physicians; 45 specialists) began to practice in Nova Scotia. Efforts on-going across the province thanks to work done in conjunction with district health authorities, communities, and groups such as Doctors Nova Scotia. To help meet future demands, doctors across Nova Scotia are being consulted on a physician resource plan to ensure that Nova Scotia has the right number of family doctors and specialists working in the right places, now and in the future.

Commitment

✔ *74. In consultation with Dalhousie Medical School and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, streamline efforts to assess qualifications of internationally trained specialists and provide additional training opportunities for them to meet Canadian standards. (p.25)*

Action

- In May, set in motion a new program to help bring more family doctors to Nova Scotia. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia will start assessing the clinical skills of internationally-trained doctors wishing to become licensed in Nova Scotia, aiding communities where recruiting physicians has been a challenge. Successful doctors will receive a defined licence and begin working as early as the fall under guidance of an experienced family doctor.
- Physician assessment sessions beginning through Clinical Assessment for Practice Program (CAPP), operated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. First session held June 2005.
- Fifty-six doctors participating in CAPP process. Those completing the process will help increase the supply of family practice specialists in Nova Scotia.
- Set up working group through Maritime Deputy Ministers of Health and Education to allow participation of Maritime provinces in the development of an assessment initiative. It is hoped that CAPP will evolve to serve as a tool to assess other specialists trained abroad.

Commitment

✔ *75. Develop a long-term plan (currently under discussion with Dalhousie Medical School) to train more undergraduates and residents. To ensure we keep the doctors we train, seats will be set aside for Nova Scotia students with deferred tuition agreements for doctors who agree to work in communities where they are needed most. (p.25)*

Action

- Invested in eight new medical seats at Dalhousie University starting in 2003, allowing for 90 entrants, up from the previous 82 seats, available each year. Total investment to establish the seats is $450,000 incrementally up to a total of $1.8 million base funding.
- Funding a new recruitment initiative through Professional Association of Residents and Interns - Maritime Provinces to ensure we keep as many Dalhousie graduates in the province as possible.

Commitment

In Progress *76. Introduce a new Medical Student Paid Co-op Program to support physicians in under-serviced areas and to encourage more medical students to pursue family practice. (p.25)*

Action

- Strategy expected to continue to evolve to meet the needs of communities.
- Introduced Debt Assistance Program (DAP) to help with recruitment in hard-to-fill areas across the province, providing $15,000 per year for three years to new physicians prepared to establish a medical practice in a designated community. Fifty per cent of the annual $15,000 will be paid at the end of each completed six-month period. Plan is open to: New medical school graduates in Family Practice or designated specialties; graduates of medical schools in Atlantic Canada or Nova Scotia residents graduating from other Canadian medical schools; communities designated by Health; and physicians with full licensure.
- Continue to assist DoctorsNS with funding of the Summer Rural Preceptorship Program in Family Medicine to provide Dalhousie medical students, who have completed their second year of study and spend four weeks of the summer in a rural practice with a family physician, with a stipend, travel expenses and a preceptor honorarium.
- Rural recruitment strategy for physicians continues to evolve. There is a menu of current tools and programs designed to assist in recruiting family doctors to under-serviced areas.

Commitment

In Progress *77. Train an additional 88 medical lab technologists, over the next four years, providing bursaries for those who agree to work in Nova Scotia. (p.25)*

Action

- Twenty-five students began two-year Medical Lab Technology program at a New Brunswick Community College January 2004 and another 25 in January 2005. Their $8,000 tuition is paid for the two-year program in return for a commitment of two years of work in Nova Scotia's health system after graduation. Additional options for training being identified. Total annual investment: $900,000.

Commitment

In Progress *78. Use the information from the current assessment of 29 health professions (including x-ray technologists, dieticians, and pharmacists) to identify new training needs and incentives to address projected shortages. (p.25)*

Action

- Analysis of health human resources supply information has facilitated bursaries with return of service agreements for Medical Laboratory Technologists who are studying at New Brunswick Community College.
- Announced in 2004 that Health, together with a broad range of professional organizations and community groups, would lead a renewed effort to secure the services of vital health care professionals, particularly for rural Nova Scotia where shortages are most acute.
- Atlantic provinces contracted consultants to develop a methodology for the development of projections related to various health professions allowing government to experiment with different models of care and understand the capabilities of various professions in roles not traditionally held.

Commitment

✔ *79. Provide bursaries to advanced paramedics in return for service agreements. (p.25)*

Action

- During 2003-04, provided for 15 paramedic bursaries for Advanced Care Paramedic Training. This is in addition to the 25 provided through the paramedics' collective agreement. This support continued during 2004-05.

Commitment

✔ *80. Invest an additional $45 million (Federal Equipment Fund) over the next three years in new medical and diagnostic equipment and staff training, including increasing the availability of MRI services in southwest and northern regions of the province. (p.25)*

Action

- Invested monies in each health district for new state-of-the art equipment, including a fifth linear accelerator purchased for the Capital District Health Authority, reducing wait times for radiation therapy. Purchased three new mammography screening units to replace aging equipment.
- Doubling the number of publicly funded MRIs with the addition of four new scanners and the replacement of two others. With support of Nova Scotia Society of Radiologists, hired an external radiologist to assess future provincial requirements for MRI services. Four new MRI units for Antigonish, Kentville, New Glasgow and Yarmouth will be operational in 2006-07. Capital District Health Authority to receive replacement MRI. Costs for the machines are shared - 75/25 (province/community). Once installed, Nova Scotia will have the best per capita rate in Canada and a significant increase in access.
- Announced in November 2003, the provision of new diagnostic medical equipment strategically placed throughout Nova Scotia. Equipment purchased includes: ultra sound units, a patient monitoring system, anaesthesia machines, a Vitek lab and radiography unit for, new x-ray and ultrasound equipment, state-of-the- art surgical equipment and pieces to treat cancer patients. Also funded special comfort equipment in hospitals, nursing homes and for province-wide diagnostic imaging system expansion.

Commitment

In Progress *81. Require all District Health Authorities to monitor and report on wait list information using common measurement tools and standards. This information will be used to identify and develop plans to address priority areas, including providing funding for over-time and weekend surgeries. (p.25)*

Commitment

In Progress *82. Establish a Provincial Wait List Information Service so patients and their doctors have access to information on where testing or treatment can be accessed fastest. (p.25)*

Action

- Standardized wait list information collection methods are being developed at the district, provincial and national levels and Nova Scotia's Wait Time Advisory Committee, in collaboration with physicians and other care providers, has established wait time targets for several services.
- Continue to work with specialists to identify waiting times for patients from referral by their general practitioners to specialists in areas such as plastic and orthopaedic surgery, neurology, dermatology, cardiology, ophthalmology and oncology. The Department and District Health Authorities are working together to expand the range of wait time information that can be collected through the provincial Nova Scotia Hospital Information System (NShIS).
- Wait time information is being reported by DHAs and physician offices. This information will be the basis for Health's Wait Time website which will be launched Fall 2005. The website will provide information to the general public on waiting times for a broad range of surgical, specialty, and diagnostic services. A secure website for physicians and other health care providers is being developed concurrently and will provide wait time information for individual medical specialists and services.
- The Provincial Wait Time Advisory Committee, chaired by George Cooper, has been active since its inception in March 2005 and provides independent advice to the Minister on wait time issues.
- At the national level, Nova Scotia has taken a lead role in the development of wait time standards and targets. This work will lead to the development of comparative wait time measures in the five priority areas identified by the First Ministers in their 2004 Accord.
- Wait time Advisory Committee formed; operational March 2005.
- To reduce wait times for orthopaedic surgery at the Capital District Health, invested an additional $6.7 million to add 25 acute care beds and more operating time for orthopaedic surgery at the QEII.
- Funded Pictou County Health Authority for a third orthopaedic surgeon, making it a fully staffed provincial orthopaedic centre and increase access.

Commitment

In Progress

83. Use information gathered from current review of Emergency Room Service to reduce wait times for emergency care. (p.25)

Action

- Invested approximately $2 million to improve ER wait time data collection as one component of the provincial wait time monitoring project.
- Implemented National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS) in Colchester Regional. Now five hospitals in Nova Scotia can provide comprehensive and comparable emergency department wait time information.
- Commitment made to enlarge the emergency room at QEII.
- Enhancements made to assist in emergency room efficiencies. These include an additional 21 acute care beds added within the Annapolis Valley District Health Authority to alleviate emergency room backlogs for admission.

Commitment

In Progress

84. Expand the number of community-clinics, including piloting specialized clinics (i.e. casting, splinting and stitching clinics) to reduce pressures on hospital-based emergency rooms, providing faster care to patients requiring immediate attention but non-life threatening care, as well as patients requiring urgent hospital-based care. (p.25)

Action

- Transitioned four pilot Strengthening Primary Care in Nova Scotia Communities Initiative (SPCI) sites to district health authorities, with sustainable funding.
- Since 2002, funded eight more nurse practitioner positions for collaborative practice in community clinics in district health authorities. Working with other communities that have expressed an interest in collaborative practice. Work is underway to transition funding for the nurse practitioners in Long and Brier Islands upon the completion of the EHS Community Paramedicine Project.
- Investing $650,000 to increase the number of community-based, multi-disciplinary teams available to serve the primary health-care needs of Nova Scotians. As part of this, four more nurse practitioners will be hired to support this collaborative approach to health care delivery.

Commitment

In Progress *85. Continue to expand the Hospital Information Management System (NShIS) so that all hospitals in Nova Scotia can share vital patient information, reducing costly duplication of diagnostic health testing and sharing vital information in the event of a medical emergency. (p.25)*

Action

- The NshIS is operational in Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Implementation continues with the installation of the system in the Annapolis Valley and South West Nova District Health Authorities in 2005-06. District 3 patient processing is installed, with the clinical components to be installed by November 2005. Implementation is expected to start in South West Nova September 2005, with the clinical components to be installed by February 2006. Project completion is expected March 2006.
- Work is continuing on interoperability component for Capital District, IWK and the Nova Scotia Hospital Information System.
- Provincial Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) project progressing on schedule, enabling the transmission of diagnostic images to anywhere in the province. Districts 1, 3 and 7 fully implemented. The Regional Hospital in District 8 implemented, with existing digital modalities, and work continuing with the implementation of Computed Radiography (CR) acquisition equipment. The central archive is operational. PACS project completion estimated for June 2006.
- Began detailed planning phase for a Client registry December 2004, with completion scheduled for Fall 2005. Also participating in a Business Case Study with Health Infrastructure Atlantic to identify Provider Registry Collaboration and Atlantic-wide PACS Options.

Commitment

✔ *86. Invest an additional $36.2 million over next three years to cover the full medical costs of nursing home care and end all asset calculations for nursing home placement. (p.26)*

Action

- Completed as of January 2005.

Commitment

In Progress 87. Report and respond to recommendations for additional long-term care beds or other assisted living options based on findings of Continuing Care review (currently underway). Also examine new, *innovative alternatives for supporting independent living, including piloting client-focused, assisted-living projects with other governments. (p.26)*

Action

- Completed report and shared information with district health authorities and other stakeholders.
- Information gathered from Phase 1 and 2 of this initiative will be updated annually and will be used in future to determine service requirements throughout the continuum of care in a given community, supporting increased accuracy in the development of projections required for the development of services.
- *Minister's Report to Nova Scotians* committed to add 91 long-term care beds. Since 2003-04, 103 new beds opened across province. (42 in Annapolis Valley District; 23 in Colchester East Hants District; 5 in Pictou County District; 2 in Cape Breton District; and 31 in Capital District)
- Set to add 25 beds in Cape Breton District. Locations of these beds will be developed as part of a district planning process.
- Developing a 150-bed facility for the Bedford/Sackville/Fall River/Waverley areas.
- Will be establishing 50 restorative care beds in locations across the province; related standards will be developed.
- Planning project to respond to the evolving needs of Nova Scotians, involving stakeholder and the general public, to guide the development of continuing care services for the next five to ten years.

Commitment

✔ *88. Establish a task force on Nova Scotia's aging population to make recommendations about future health and social programming needs. (p.26)*

Action

- Provided $150,000 to the Seniors' Secretariat to lead Nova Scotia's first Task Force on Aging and launch new efforts to prevent elder abuse.
- Province-wide consultations held, with over 1000 individuals participating. Release of *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* expected Fall 2005.
- Expanded the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy Committee to include more partners and stakeholders.
- Prepared and distributed more than 10,000 brochures, *Elder Abuse - We can't always see it...but we know it's there*. Also creating additional information tools.

Commitment

In Progress *89. Based on recommendations from working groups currently examining rural Palliative Care, identify and fund next steps to expand access to end of life care. (p.26)*

Action

- Developed Service Delivery Guidelines approved by the Project Steering Committee. District consultations held Fall 2004 to introduce guidelines and determine current level of end of life care being delivered in each district health authority.
- Added co-ordinator for palliative care services and provided support for the development of an interdisciplinary palliative care team in Shelburne, Yarmouth and Digby counties.

Commitment

✔ *90. Introduce a new Low Income Drug Assistance Plan for diabetics without drug coverage. As resources allow, extend the program to low income Nova Scotians with other chronic diseases. (p.26)*

Action

- Developing parameters for a comprehensive program to build on existing programs with self-management support as a central component. The program will include insulin, antihyperglycemics, glucose test strips, needles, syringes and lancets. Program also to include educational tools that will promote a healthy lifestyle for people with diabetes and provide a link to support services within the health care system across the province. Diabetes, if not managed, can lead to complications such as heart disease, kidney failure, blindness and amputation. About five percent of Nova Scotians have diabetes; many are not insured for the medications and supplies that can prevent or delay the onset of these complications.
- Planning is well underway. Health is working with the Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia's Canadian Diabetes Association. Total budgeted for 2005-06: $2.5 million.

Commitment

✔ *91. Aggressively promote 'Knowledge is the Best Medicine', an education campaign designed to prevent the over-use or misuse of prescription drugs. (p.26)*

Action

- *Knowledge is the Best Medicine* underway since 2003, includes sending a booklet and brochure to Nova Scotians over 65 who are participating in the Pharmacare Program. People turning 65 received a *Knowledge is the Best Medicine* brochure/education record book to increase awareness about proper use of medications and provide a tool for tracking the use of medications.

In Progress

Commitment

92. Work to expand the number of prescription drugs currently assessed under the Provincial Drug Monitoring Program. (p.26)

Action

- Proclaimed Prescription Monitoring Act July 2005 and approved regulations. Appointed members to the Prescription Monitoring Board, set to meet September 2005.
- Put in place a new, technologically advanced, computerized information system to support the prescription monitoring program beginning June 2005 and phased in over next six to 12 months. Community pharmacies will link to the system over the next year as their software is upgraded to interact with the PMP software.
- Approved a privacy policy, developed in conjunction with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Commitment

In Progress

93. Outline a detailed plan with time lines for achieving the objectives outlined in the Nova Scotia Task Force on Primary Health Care, including more aggressively supporting an "integrated team approach" in care delivery. (p.26)

Action

- Efforts to renew the Primary Health Care system in accordance with the recommendations of the Nova Scotia Advisory Committee on Primary Health Care Renewal include:
  - Investing $650,000 to support formation of community-based collaborative primary health care teams, including funding to the district health authorities and the Tui'kn initiative in Cape Breton to hire four nurse practitioners. There are now 20 funded primary health care nurse practitioner positions in various locations across the province, up from four in 2003. In addition, support for the formation of an expanded multi-disciplinary team collaborative model at Duffus Street Integrated Family Medical Centre. DHAs will continue development of innovative primary health care initiatives.
  - Established the Primary Maternity Care Working Group in Spring 2004 to facilitate the integration of midwives into collaborative practice teams delivering primary maternity care in Nova Scotia. Completed report; recommendations being reviewed.
  - The three-year Diversity and Social Inclusion in Primary Health Care Initiative is working to effectively address the primary health care needs of traditionally defined, culturally diverse populations focusing on components of race, ethnicity, language and culture. Have involved a broad range of primary health care stakeholders, including DHAs and culturally diverse populations in the planning and delivery of the initiative from the outset. Final report expected Spring 2006. Facilitated community workshops in district health authorities as part of initiative to help build culturally inclusive policies and guidelines for cultural competence in the delivery of care. Once approved, these will be the first provincial guidelines for cultural competence in Canada.
  - The Building a Better Tomorrow Initiative (BBTI) is funded ($7.1 million) through the Primary Health Care Transition Fund, Health Canada and involves each of the four Atlantic Canada provinces with Nova Scotia designated as the lead province. The main goals: to develop comprehensive, continuing, inter-professional education for primary health care providers focused on effective, collaborative practice, team building and change management and to successfully engage these providers through involving them in the development, implementation and evaluation of the program.

- Dalhousie/Memorial Universities consultants completed Needs Assessment Report and Recommendations March 2005. The consultants developed principles, general characteristics and a template for the program, content areas and modules, as well as a comprehensive evaluation strategy. Arrangements made with New Brunswick for French translation of the eight completed educational modules. Educational modules will support health care providers in developing competencies for inter-professional primary health care practice.
- Supporting an initiative in the Guysborough Antigonish Strait District Health Authority to increase awareness of literacy as a determinant of health and raise awareness among primary health care service providers of issues related to literacy. Held a launch April 2005 in Dartmouth to highlight initiative. Developed and distributed awareness video to districts and other stakeholders. Looking at further initiatives to support activity.

- The Primary Healthcare Information Management (PHIM) program was launched in February 2005. The program will enable improved primary health care delivery by adopting enhanced ways of managing information and accelerating the uptake of approved electronic patient record (EPR) systems across Nova Scotia. Electronic patient record systems will link community physicians, hospitals and other authorized primary health care professionals. Results to date include:
  - selection of two program approved EPR software applications;
  - establishment of a Primary Health Care application hosting centre;
  - launch of a collaborative project to provide electronic delivery of lab and diagnostic imaging results to authorized health providers - expected to go live by Fall 2005;
  - establishment of a multi-levelled support model that includes a primary health care helpdesk as a single point of contact to all approved EPR software users; and
  - developed a change management program to help care providers transition to new EPR information systems. Program to be evaluated in a demonstration phase and released Fall 2005 to interested primary healthcare clinics.
- Consulted with stakeholders on the development of an evaluation framework for primary health care February 2004. Planning workshop on primary health care research and knowledge translation Spring 2006.

In Progress

Commitment

94. Implement the Report of the Integrated Stroke Care Strategy Committee in consultation with district health authorities. Strategy will include establishing a comprehensive and integrated stroke care system that includes health promotion, emergency and acute care, and rehabilitation. (p.26)

Action

- Nova Scotia received national recognition for being a leader in laying groundwork for a comprehensive, integrated stroke strategy. Working to continue to advance Stroke Strategy Committee recommendations.
- Budget 2005 invested $500,000 to implement the Stroke Demonstration (program in South West Nova DHA to evaluate approaches to assist in province-wide planning) and provincial planning components.
- Expanded mandate of the Cardiovascular Advisory Council, with new representation requested over Summer 2005 - enhanced provincial program entitled Cardiovascular Health Nova Scotia.
- Acute Stroke Working Group underway, with the stroke rehabilitation working group targeted to begin in the fall.

Commitment

✔ *95. Develop and implement a Provincial Injury and Accident Prevention Strategy, including a Falls Prevention Education Campaign targeted to Nova Scotia's senior population. (p.27)*

Action

- Established Nova Scotia Injury Prevention Strategy Fall 2003, with Health Promotion providing leadership in its implementation and evaluation.
- In Spring 2005, developed a specific falls prevention strategy as a component of the NS Injury Prevention Strategy. Examples of falls prevention initiatives include:
  - Providing $300,000 over three years to Community Links to deliver the Preventing Falls Together (PFT) initiative across Nova Scotia. The PFT initiative is developing a sustainable network of regional falls prevention coalitions who will work with seniors, caregivers, health professionals, government and other community organizations to develop falls prevention strategies that address the specific needs of their communities; and
  - Established Provincial Intersectoral Falls Prevention Committee to coordinate falls prevention initiatives. Includes representatives from provincial organizations and professional bodies who work with seniors groups, including the Senior Citizens' Secretariat, DHAs, and government departments, to help identify program and policy gaps and needs.
- Suicide, or purposeful self-injury, is the leading cause of injury-related death and third leading cause of death and third leading cause of injury-related hospitalization - linked with depression. Mental Health working on strategy for secondary prevention of depression and working with Nova Scotia Health Promotion on suicide prevention strategies.
- Developed a Fall Prevention and Management Program for long-term care, acute care and home care.

Commitment

✔ *96. Continue to expand community-based mental health services by introducing crisis intervention services in all districts. (p.27)*

Action

- Expanded Crisis Services in various health districts across the province. To improve services to children and youth, including emergency and crisis services, and expand community supports for Nova Scotians with severe and persistent mental illness, increased mental health budget by $6.4 million for 2005-06.
- Invested additional money in 2005-06 for enhanced Crisis/Emergency services to the IWK, Capital Health, and two Districts.

Commitment

In Progress *97. Increase our investment in the professionals, community networks and equipment required to support cancer care. (p.27)*

Action

- Cancer Care Nova Scotia introduced two new patient navigator roles in October 2003 in South Shore and Annapolis Valley Health Authorities. Positions have since been transitioned to the districts. In total, five Patient Navigators now funded.
- Opened new linear accelerator February 2005 in Capital District and increased capacity to treat 30 to 35 more patients each week.
- Initiated implementation of the Interprofessional Core Curriculum in Districts 7 and 8.

Commitment

In Progress *98. Develop additional 'shared care' pilots that link physicians with mental health professionals for effective early identification and treatment of depression and anxiety. (p.27)*

Action

- Expanded from three demonstration sites in Halifax/Dartmouth to eleven sites in Capital District Health, reflecting different approaches and greater multi-disciplinary focus, with added attention to children and youth.
- Selective development of Shared Care has occurred in rural areas, including Cumberland County, with specific populations associated with the Seniors' Mental Health Program, Capital District, and the primary health care service at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, Burnside.

Commitment

✔ *99. Provide Community Health Boards with annual funding to support community-based health promotion and disease prevention strategies. On-going funding will be tied to a rigorous evaluation of outcomes. (p.27)*

Action

- Providing $380,000 for the CHB Wellness Fund grants distributed to the districts for distribution to the community health boards for community-based health promotion in the seven strategic priority areas (healthy eating, healthy sexuality, physical activity, tobacco reduction, injury prevention, addictions, and chronic disease prevention).

Commitment

In Progress

100. Create a "Kids N Care" navigation system for children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems to provide for early intervention and improved health outcomes. (p.27)

Action

- Work on-going; consultations with Community Services to enhance services to children in care.
- Put in place protocols for referral between Secure Care, Colchester DHA and IWK.
- Hired part-time psychologist and primary care physician. Transferred Children's Response Program, a mental health program for children under 12 years of age, from Community Services to Health; the IWK will continue to provide service.

Commitment

In Progress

101. Introduce a new Mental Health Services Act.

Action

- Held one-day legislation conference with mental health stakeholders and mental health consumers February 2005 to help build consensus around new mental health legislation.
- Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act was introduced Spring 2005 and awaits passage in the legislature; currently in Second Reading.

Commitment

✔

102. Continue to work with our health partners on an evidence-based strategy to reduce Nova Scotia's high rates of chronic disease. Nova Scotia's Chronic Disease Prevention Plan (CDPP) will include a comprehensive, multi-year approach that includes targets and time lines. (p.27)

Action

- Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy (CDPS) presentation delivered to Health and Health Promotion October 2003. Incorporated CDPS into 2004-05 Health Promotion planning.
- Have partnership agreement with NSHRF to develop a research agenda for NSHP to include identifying research questions and processes to access meaningful health promotion research to make evidence-based policy decisions. This includes a 50 per cent funded position at NSHRF.
- Hired provincial Chronic Disease Prevention Coordinator March 2004.
- Budget 2005 funded DHAs to hire new chronic disease prevention co-ordinators in each District.

Commitment

In Progress *103. Double the funding for the Office of Health Promotion. (p.27)*

Action

- As part of a four-year commitment, Health Promotion received $14.9 million in Budget 2003-04 - also received an additional $3.6 million in Budget 2004-05 and another $5.4 million in Budget 2005, for a total of $9 million over the last two years. Some of the increases included: RFD Grant funding (approximately $5.5 million); Problem Gambling Strategy - $3 million with a full recovery from the Gaming Corporation; Healthy Foods in Schools/Breakfast Programs in Schools and Healthy Food Choices - $2 million and continued growth in Nova Scotia Health Promotion - $1.5 million.

Commitment

✔ *104. Provide an allowable tax expense starting at $150/per child to help off-set the costs of registering children and youth into sport or recreational activities that offer potential health dividends. (p.27)*

Action

- Tax incentive took effect July 1, 2005. Individuals will be able make claims for all of 2005.

Commitment

✔ *105. Implement and fund the next steps outlined in Active Kids/Healthy Kids (AKHK), Nova Scotia's physical activity strategy for children and youth. (p.30)*

Action

- AK/HK Management Team reviewed the strategy and Year 3 is in progress.
- In addition to the AK/HK strategy, Health Promotion and Education have begun initiatives that will positively affect physical education and marketing in 2005-06.

Commitment

In Progress *106. Dedicate additional resources to support Esteem Team: Nova Scotia athletes go to schools and community groups to speak of the value and benefits of sport and healthy living. (p.30)*

Action

- Meetings with the Esteem Team underway. Esteem Team in the process of hiring a staff person for the Eastern Provinces to be housed in Halifax.

Commitment

✔ *107. Provide resources, in conjunction with the federal government and the private sector, to support KidSport, a program to raise funds to help offset the cost of organized sport for children and youth from low income families. (p.30)*

Action

- Provided $330,000 in 2004 to Sport Nova Scotia to support its Kid Sport Program and support children from low income families to play sports. This investment helps to ensure that more children than ever have the opportunity to live healthier and live better.

Commitment

In Progress *108. Ensure our publicly-owned schools are made available to support free after-school physical activities for youth. (p.30)*

Action

- Passed legislation providing rent-free use of school facilities for activities for children and youth. Proclaiming changes once Fees for Usage Policy approved.
- Working with school boards in 2005-06 to implement the community use of schools policy framework by working towards standardized access and rate charges and ensuring facilities are available for community and youth use.

Commitment

In Progress *109. Guarantee a minimum of 6 hours of after-class time is provided to community groups that encourage physical activity. (p.30)*

Action

- Participated in and evaluated Active School Community annual conference May 2004.
- Conducted follow-up survey in June 2004 to gather physical education instructional time data, Grades 7–9, for the 2003-04 school year; produced a physical education instructional time report and included comprehensive physical education and physical activity recommendations in *Learning for Life II*.
- School boards to draft board community use policies in Fall 2005.

Commitment

In Progress *110. Require that municipalities receiving future Provincial Recreation Facility Funding provide established free family recreation time (i.e. family skating, swimming). (p.30)*

Action

- Scanning facilities to identify those offering these services; completion expected March 2006.

Commitment

✔ *111. Dedicate resources within the Office of Health Promotion, the Youth Secretariat and the Senior Citizen's Secretariat to identify and implement new community-based approaches that encourage healthy living among the young and old. (p.30)*

Action

- Continue to support the *Preventing Falls Together* program through Community Links, again providing $100,000 in 2005-06 to develop community-based services, supports, education and assistance to develop falls prevention strategies.
- Compiling list of active living programs available for seniors and supporting the Seniors' Secretariat's Active Living Committee as it works on additional initiatives.
- Broadening the Physical Activity Strategy to include seniors, hosting the first-ever Nova Scotia 55+ Games, and continuing to provide physical activity enhancement grants to community groups and encouraging applications from seniors.

Commitment

✔ *112. Work with school boards to implement healthy eating policies as part of a comprehensive healthy eating strategy for Nova Scotia and introduce Our Healthy School initiative in all elementary schools by year four. (p.30)*

Action

- Budget 2005-06 invested in a province-wide expansion of breakfast programs for our elementary schools and $345,000 more to expand the successful Health Promoting Schools Project piloted in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board.
- Provided grant to Breakfast for Learning to support the development and implementation of the breakfast programs.
- Will appoint School Health Co-ordinator to assist boards, schools, and other partners in implementing comprehensive, integrated, collaborative school health promotion policies and programs.
- Released Food and Nutrition in Nova Scotia Schools report August 2004.
- Working with partners on the development of the School Food and Nutrition Policy Framework. Consultations with key stakeholders to occur in September-October 2005 on issues including: foods offered at school cafeterias, vending machines, fund-raising, portion sizes, nutrition education and vulnerable children. Implementation set to begin during 2005-06 school year.

Commitment

In Progress *113. Increase the number of Teen Health Centres throughout the province. (p.30)*

Action

- Approved standards for Youth Health Centres. Impact assessment currently underway to evaluate Youth Health Centres in relation to the approved standards.
- Provincial work is underway with partners/stakeholders in the areas of informed consent, partnerships clinical guidelines, orientation, and evaluation.

Commitment

✔ *114. Expand programs such as Partnerships for Inclusion and Building Blocks that support good parenting and healthy child development initiatives into more Family Resource Centres, making them the hub for community-based resources for families and children in the early years. (p.30)*

Action

- *Partnership for Inclusion Program* is an on-going initiative. As of June 2005, it was expanded to include another 34 licensed childcare centres. Currently, program in effect in 78 licensed childcare centres.
- *Building Blocks* project complete. Total of 346 Early Childhood Educators, 38 community partners and 21 facilitators across Nova Scotia completed training to provide appropriate supports for special needs children. Master trainers now available. Early childhood development officers in each region will be carrying on workshop facilitation of the *Building Blocks* process.

Commitment

✔ *115. Establish Regional Early Childhood Development Teams in each region to help parents access services to address their child's needs. (p.30)*

Action

- Established a Provincial Advisory Committee to review parent education programs.
- Regional planning teams and community development workers now in place across province. Teams developing plans to help improve access to regional services and address gaps in service. Work to create a comprehensive system of supports for children, birth to 6 years of age, includes the development of terms of reference, an environmental scan of programs and services, and the preliminary development of strategic plans.

Commitment

In Progress

116. Create Nova Scotia's first School and Workplace Health Champions Award. Winning strategies for promoting good health will be featured in a provincial media campaign and provided with a financial reward to be used to support on-going healthy school and workplace initiatives. (p.30)

Action

- Development work for setting award criteria underway.
- Health Promotion working in communities by enabling stakeholders and community decision-makers. To communicate the progress made, ads were done in March/April 2005 congratulating "champion" stakeholders across province.

Commitment

In Progress

117. Work with the Department of Education, NSTU and school boards to expand health curriculum professional development opportunities. (p.30)

Action

- Implementation of new health/personal development and relationships curriculum for Grade 7. Held education-supported board implementation workshops in May 2004. In September 2004, *Health/Personal Development and Relationships: Grade 7* distributed to schools.
- Working with health and education community partners to identify and expand opportunities for the involvement of public health professionals in schools.

Commitment

✔

118. Introduce additional anti-smoking programs in our schools and workplaces, including launching "You Choose" in our schools (students determine anti-smoking ads) and providing workplaces with links to smoking cessation programs provided through local addiction services. (p.30)

Action

- In February 2005, launched "You Choose" curriculum supplement for Grades 10-12 English Language Arts curriculum. Workplace resource developed to assist employers in supporting employees to stop smoking. District health authorities promoted resource in workplaces.
- Published tobacco/nicotine treatment services standards and best practices March 2005.

Commitment

✔ *119. Continue to fund Nova Scotia's Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy with a commitment to use a portion of additional revenues generated from future tobacco tax revenues to support anti-smoking programs and supports. (p.30)*

Action

- Launched Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation initiative July 2005 to provide supports and resources to community and provincial sport and recreation groups that develop their own tobacco-free policies. Provides how-to-guide to help groups develop their own tobacco-free policy, as well as funding for tobacco-free banners, promotional material and the use of a "tobacco-free" logo on team uniforms.
- Action is on-going on all seven elements of the comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy, including enforcement of the Smoke-Free Places Act and the Tobacco Access Act, enhanced community-based and nicotine treatment programs, and the provincial public awareness campaign.
- Released first tobacco strategy report card in 2005.
- Announced May 2005 that by December 1, 2006, smoking will not be permitted in all public places and work places.

Commitment

In Progress *120. Urge the federal government to partner with the province and Nova Scotia municipalities on a new multi-year infrastructure program that focuses on recreational facilities, green ways, hiking and biking trails. (p.31)*

Action

- Participating on the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Sport and Recreation Facility Infrastructure Committee to determine the current status of sport and recreation facility infrastructure in Canada and develop a recommendation on a definition of "need". Goal is to achieve regional balance in the context of infrastructure, sport training centres and legacies from hosting international multi-sport events.
- Community-based rail corridor trail development projects provided with access to ACOA funds.
- In final stages of negotiations with Infrastructure Canada (Cities and Communities Directorate) for $145 million gas tax fund program that will focus on green, municipal infrastructure. Program funds will be provided by the federal government with the Province providing administration and in-kind contributions through the various programs and services already in place to assist Nova Scotia municipalities.

Commitment

In Progress

121. Develop a comprehensive, easy-to-use health information referral service and interactive web site to respond to information requests on government and non-government (i.e. Health Charities Network/Sport Nova Scotia) health programs, services and information. This service will be expanded over time to include detailed programs/services available in individual communities (i.e. accessible transportation services, volunteer home supports, peer support groups, CHB primary health care plans, etc.). (p.31)

Action

- Set to launch a new website containing wait time information on selected health care services. Information will also be added to the site on government's plan to improve wait times and provincial measures taken to address wait times across health system.
- The Wait Time Monitoring Project Steering Committee recommended reporting on orthopaedic surgery, diagnostics and referrals from GPs to specialists in a standard way.
- Wait Time Advisory Committee continuing to advise on ways to reduce wait times which will also be shared on the website.

Commitment

In Progress

122. Maximize the value of Nova Scotia's public health professionals (public health nurses, addictions counsellors, paramedics, nutritionists, etc.) by examining new opportunities for their involvement in schools, Family Resource Centres and supporting CHBs in community health planning. (p. 31)

Action

- Budget 2005 dedicated $595,000 in grants to schools so they can develop or start a healthy eating plan. Funds will be directed for several initiatives including training for staff and volunteers involved in school food and nutrition. A $360,000 investment will place public health nutritionists in each district health authority to support the implementation of the Healthy Eating Nova Scotia strategy, released in March 2005, providing support to schools in their region to develop and start healthy eating programs.

Commitment

In Progress

123. Work with non-government organizations, including Health Charities Network and Sport Nova Scotia, to identify new strategies to encourage individual businesses and workplace organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Labour) to promote workplace health. (p.31)

Action

- Funding two pilot projects looking at Workplace Health Promotion.
- Working with a variety of workplace health promotion stakeholders on a plan to develop a Workplace Wellness Strategy for the private sector. This includes a review of the preliminary evaluation findings of pilot projects and development of plan for strategy.
- Hosting in November 2005, in partnership with non-governmental organizations and stakeholders, a Workplace Health Promotion Stakeholders Forum to share the provincial model for comprehensive workplace health (developed through HealthWorks with DHAs and Nova Scotia Health Promotion) and to seek input into implementation of the model.
- Funding Public Service Commission's Workplace Wellness Program through hiring of a coordinator.

Commitment

In Progress

124. Ensure district health authorities and community health boards have current and reliable information, allowing them to appropriately assess the health status of a community and establish targets for improving health in each community. (p.31)

Action

- Funded *Nova Scotia Community Counts* project which is the development of a statistical infrastructure system of comprehensive socio-economic data sources. Provides government, business, and community decision-makers and citizens with easy and timely access to quality, comprehensive information presented in an intuitive and informative manner. It provides information to develop an understanding of and make assessments and comparisons about the health, safety and security, and quality of life in Nova Scotia communities and regions and to make comparisons with other provinces. The system integrates broad-based statistical information with other available data. It also supports efforts at sustaining and improving the social and economic viability of all regions of our province.

- Widely used by community health planners in the development of community health board and district health authority community profiles used for review and planning system level improvements to health care and health promotion.
- Key partnerships with academics, community development groups, business associations and the federal and municipal governments enabling development of a more responsive, relevant system to meet a wide variety of needs. In particular ACOA is funding a Community Development Planning Program that will provide training, templates, and workbooks to assist with community level planning, using *Community Counts* as a foundation.
- There are continuing discussions with departments to expand the range of readily-available community level information. In-patient hospital discharge data at the county level will be among the first of health-related data to be included in the system. Other health data sets and statistical information from other departments are in various stages of consideration for development.
- NSHP has utilized *Community Counts* in the development of program and policy initiatives related to:
  - Fluoride Mouth Rinse Program - a program implemented to elementary school aged children at risk for dental caries;
  - Healthy Beginnings Program - a support program for children and families;
  - Arena Facility Planning; and
  - Providing preliminary background information on Video Lottery

Commitment

In Progress

125. Provide on-going training and development opportunities for District Health Authorities and Community Health Boards in the areas of community mobilization, understanding and evaluating data, and the factors that influence health. (p.31)

Action

- Health Promotion invited for second year to give a presentation at the Annual Community Health Board conference, highlighting the work of Strategic Priority Areas and the linkages between Health Promotion and Community Health Boards.
- In June 2004, Health Promotion attended the CHB Annual Conference and provided an education awareness program to share promising and best practices as well as key linkages.

Commitment

In Progress

126. Work with the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre to implement recommendations based on food security research to ensure healthy food choices are more accessible to all Nova Scotians. (p.31)

Action

- Provided funding to the Atlantic Health Research Promotion Centre and the Nova Scotia Nutritional Council to develop a sustainable food costing model for Nova Scotia. Part of the development of the model is to complete a food costing comparison to determine the changing cost of eating a nutritious diet. Data to be released Fall 2005.
- Part of the funded project was to develop a "Building the Case" document for food security, including a policy lens to be used across government to assess the impact of policy decisions on food security. Recommendations expected Fall 2005 and will focus discussions within government to ensure healthy food choices are accessible to all Nova Scotians.
- Continuing involvement with the Provincial Food Security Projects Steering Committee (PFSPSC).
- Funding in 2005-06 provided to the PFSPSC to continue the work of food security in Nova Scotia.

Commitment

In Progress

127. Partner with municipalities and the UNSM to encourage and enhance development of trails and greenways. (p.31)

Action

- Partnering with municipalities and several other government departments to enhance the development of trails and greenways.
- Holding seminars with all mayors and wardens twice yearly to discuss delivery of sport and recreation and physical activity in their jurisdictions.
- Seeking agreement among all three levels of government to establish dedicated funding for active transportation infrastructure (walking, hiking, cycling, etc.).
- Work continuing with a number of community-based organizations and municipal governments, including HRM, Chester, and Lunenburg, on delivery of new hiking opportunities and trail development. Streamlining and clarifying application process for trail development proposals. Fourteen letters of authority have been issued for trail development.
- Focusing on the Pathways Tour and evaluating results. The Pathways tour covers approximately 25 communities in Nova Scotia to raise awareness around active transportation, its benefits and how to incorporate it into communities. Information gathered at the public and municipal meetings is being used to shape the Pathways for People Framework for Action.

Learning is Succeeding

"Government will continue to build on its plan that focuses on putting the basics first, focusing on the student, helping those in need of extra support, being accountable to parents, supporting teachers in the classroom, and providing a safe and healthy place to learn. This focus includes more training, research and resources."

Commitment

In Progress

128. Increase funding by an additional $1,000 per student by year four. (p. 35)

Action

- In 2005-06, $1.087 billion, about $ 7,590 per student, will be spent on public school education, representing an increase of close to $600 per student.

Commitment

In Progress

129. Pilot a new Ready to Learn voluntary, free pre-school program for 4-year-olds, developed by the departments of Community Services, Education and Health. Curriculum will be activity-based, and emphasize socialization skills, to help children become more "ready to learn" by the time they enter school. Assessments, such as hearing and speech, will be carried out through the Ready to Learn program to target early intervention services for children in need. The first pilots will be targeted in areas where day care access is limited, and where school space is now available. Pilot evaluations will be conducted to determine the benefits of making the program universally available. (p.35)

Action

- Hired project co-ordinator November 2004.
- Drafted a framework, developed criteria for pilot sites in January 2005 and requested pilot site recommendations from boards.
- Budget 2005 supported a pilot to begin in Fall 2005 for up to 20 free and full-day, activity-based preschool programs for four-year-olds in areas that meet the following criteria: where there is known demand, where there is a lack of readily available day-care spaces, and where existing schools have room to accommodate additional students.

Commitment

✔

130. Increase the number of Family Resource Centres offering Early Language and Learning Programs. Programs provide parents, family resource and child care staff with training to enhance child's language and cognitive development. (p. 35)

Action

- Enhanced funding for Early Language and Learning Program by $140,000 to support an additional speech language pathologist position, local grants to three new family resource centres and outreach in four communities with existing Early Language and Learning programs.
- Programs now operational in all regions of province through the Family Resource Centres.

Commitment

In Progress 131. *Promote greater use of parent volunteers within Family Resource Centres. (p. 35)*

Action

- Established working group to oversee and co-ordinate volunteer initiative.
- Held symposium for all family resource centres in October 2004 to share information, identify strategies and involve stakeholders.
- Held workshops, allocated eight "Building Futures Together" grants and developed and implemented a volunteer recognition strategy.
- In 2005-06, the provincial working group will be participating in a visionary exercise determining future directions. Training in volunteer management will be delivered Fall 2005.

Commitment

✔ *132. Further reduce class sizes to provide more one-on-one teaching time. (p. 35)*

✔ *133. Beginning in 2005, combined Primary-Grade 1 classes would have a maximum of 20 students or an additional non-teaching adult in the classroom. These criteria would also apply to Primary and Grade 1 classes with students with special needs who have an individual program plan. (p. 35)*

Pending *134. In 2006, the criteria (combined classes/IPP students) for a 20 student maximum will extend to Grade 1-2 and 2-3 classes.*

Pending *135. In 2006, all Grade 3 classes will have a maximum of 25 students.*

Pending *136. In 2007, all Grade 4 classes will have a maximum of 25 students.*

Action

- Funded class size initiative, moved from Primary to cap Grade 1 classes at 25 students as of September 2004.
- Budget 2005 invested $6.3 million more to extend multi-year plan to reduce class sizes in the early years. Expanding initiative to Grade 2 in 2005.
- As well, in all Grade Primary and Grade 1 classes where there is a special needs student following an Individualized Program Plan, and in combined grades Primary and 1, either the class size will be capped at 20, or there will be additional supervision by another adult. An implementation report will be carried out in January 2006.

Commitment

✔ *137. Provide students with at least one million more books, math tools, learnware packages and teaching resources (by Year 4). (p. 36)*

Action

- Announced in March 2004 students in province's public schools have a million more books.
- Budget 2005 provided for an additional $1 million for more books and teaching resources, on top of the $500,000 announced in December 2004.
- Provided *Discovery Links* social studies resources for Grades Primary to 7.
- Grade 7 *Changing Your World: Investigating Empowerment* social studies as well as Writers in Action resources will be provided in September 2005.
- *Active Readers* 7 to 9 Collections: Student Resources will be provided in Fall 2005.
- In 2004-05, distributed resources to support Literacy/Science 3, Active Young Readers 4 - 6, and *Writers in Action*; and *Math Makes Sense 3* resources and additional teacher resources for Grades P-6.
- Purchased new social studies resources for Grades Primary - 2 and Grade 7; *Math Makes Sense 4* resources for introduction 2005-06; and writing centre resources for Grade 7 classrooms for distribution Fall 2005.
- Published teaching resources for math Grades 7-9.
- Distributed in 2005:
  - *Active Readers Assessment Resource: Young Adolescents*; additional math resources for Grades P-6; teaching resource for physics; classroom resources to support the writing program in Graders 1-3; *Active Readers 4 and 6* classroom supplementary materials; resources for Sciences Humaines P-2 (immersion); Mathématiques 3 textbooks (immersion); resources for Litérature P-6 (immersion) and Grade 9 French immersion; and classroom resources for Grades 8 and 9 Core French.

Commitment

✔ *138. Continue testing program, including a new Grade 6 language arts test, where parents are provided, for the first time, with their child's individualized test results. (p.36)*

Action

- Administered the Grade 6 language arts test (French) September 2004.
- Administered the Grade 6 language arts test (English) October 2004.
- Carried out marking and standard-setting November 2004.
- Released schools report January 2005.
- Released parents report and a public report March 2005.
- Elementary Literacy Assessment will be administered to Grade 6 students in 2005-06 with individual student results being provided to parents.
- Continue Student Tracking and Monitoring System to follow students identified by the Elementary Literacy Assessment as struggling with reading and/or writing and to monitor supports/interventions provided.

Commitment

✔ *139. Use individualized test results (Reading and Math) and teacher assessments to identify struggling students, and provide intervention and support for them in junior high to achieve better learning outcomes. (p. 36)*

Action

- Added $1 million in Spring 2004 to assist students needing extra help with reading and writing as they move into junior high. Continuing support in 2005-06 for Grade 7-8 students who did not meet elementary literacy expectations.
- Continuing development of new mathematics classroom assessment resources for Grades Primary–3 to be introduced in September 2006. These will assist teachers in identifying the mathematical strengths and needs of all students and provide effective interventions and supports for students who have difficulties in mathematics.
- Continuing development of the Mathematical Literacy Assessment - Grade 3, the Language Literacy Assessment - Grade 3, and the Language Literacy Competency Assessment - Grade 9 for delivery in 2006–2007 school year.

In Progress

Commitment

140. Provide parents with additional information and strategies that support at home learning, such as "homework baggies" with learning activity cards. Emphasis will be placed on the early years in reading, writing and math. (p. 36)

Action

- Completed new information pamphlets for parents including Let's Talk About..pamphlets for mathematics, literacy, and writing. Several information resources will be ready for distribution in 2005-06, including content for Homework Baggies kits for Grades Primary, Primary/1, 1, and 1 / 2 and pamphlets for parents focussing on reading and writing in Grades 4-6.
- Distributing Math: Home-School Communication resource for Grades Primary -6 and providing home activity resources for parents to support their children's mathematics learning September 2005. Also set to launch a Literacy: Home-School Communication resource in Fall 2005.
- In Spring 2004, included parent information/involvement components in literacy PD workshops: Writers in Action.

✔

Commitment

141. Complete Learning for Life plan for students with special needs, including more professionals, assistive technology, Reading Recovery ™ available to all Grade 1 classes, and individualized support for students ($17.4 million 2003-06).

Action

- Allocated funding for core professional services (more speech pathologists, resource teachers, etc.) and Innovation Fund (pilots) and Assistive Technology in April 2005.
- In 2005-06, extending early intervention Reading Recovery™ program for all English classroom Grade 1 students.
- Completed research project to examine how to adapt the assessments and teaching in Reading Recovery™ for French Immersion students. Funding training of French Immersion teachers in Reading Recovery™ in September 2005, including training for teachers and learning materials.
- Targeted funding in 2004-05 to develop new programming to address gaps in services and enhance the ratios of core professional service providers such as resource teachers, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists in school boards. Funding also provided to assist boards in providing assistive technology and related services.

✔

Commitment

142. Develop and fund a new tuition support program for special needs students with individual program plans. The program will include a faster appeal process, including an ombudsman for students with special needs. The ombudsman will have authority to recommend options, including providing the equivalent of the annual per student funding to parents for students with IPPs attending private schools. Additional support could be offered to low-income families so ability to pay is not a barrier. As well, accountability agreements would be required with private schools. (p. 36)

Action

- Established a Tuition Support Program through legislation passed Spring 2004.
- Designated three private special-education schools for participation in the program for students with special needs. Students accepted at Bridgeway Academy, Churchill Academy and Landmark East in 2004-05, may be eligible for the equivalent of per pupil funding (approx. $5,800) for two years.
- Developed guidelines and regulations for implementing program in Summer 2004. Also developed a transition plan for those already enrolled in private schools.
- Appointed one-person board of appeal in March 2005.
- Continuing program in 2005 with $200,000 in funding. Monitoring program delivery, with assessment expected after sufficient experience.

Commitment

In Progress

143. Establish a professional certification requirement for all new teacher assistants. Professional development will be provided for existing teacher assistants to upgrade their skills, as necessary, to meet the needs of the children they support.

Action

- Consulted with community colleges and school boards to discuss options.
- Assisting boards in Fall 2005 to develop health protocols for training teacher assistants with DHAs.

Commitment

✔ *144. Expand the range of advanced high school in-class and distance education courses to include language arts, social sciences and the arts. (p.36)*

Action

- Increased access to public school courses through development of correspondence study and on-line delivery including English Communications, Geology, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Math.
- Developed an Outcomes Framework and draft content for Advanced Physics 11 and Advanced Physics 12.
- Developed a framework for the provision of advanced social studies, fine arts, and language arts courses, including English 11 and 12, Music 11, Global Geography 12, Global History 12, and Visual Arts 11.
- With community and university partners, will develop new public school advanced courses for English and Chemistry at the Grade 11 level and for Music, Visual Arts, Chemistry, Global Geography, Global History in Grade 12.
- Working on piloting new Advanced Music 11, Advanced Visual Arts 11, Advanced Physics 11, and Advanced Physics 12 courses. (Support for implementation of Calculus 12 will continue.); providing funding support to boards for International Baccalaureate professional development; and continuing to develop new public school advanced course for Grades 11, 12.

Commitment

In Progress 145. Add resources to support the long-term viability of isolated rural schools, including establishing minimum standards for delivering classroom and distance education. (p.36)

Action

- Producing new material for Math Academic 10, 11 and 12, Math Foundations 11 and Math 8 and 9 to add to the current Correspondence Study Program courses.
- Working to release three new Correspondence Study courses for student use in fiscal 2005-06: Biology 11, Chemistry 11, and Canadian History 11. In addition, five new Correspondence Study courses will be piloted in: Health/ Personal Development and Relationships 9, Science 9, Communications Technology 12, Mathematics Foundations 11, and Global Geography 12.
- Set to start development of six additional Correspondence Study courses: English 7, Science 8, History 10, Keyboarding 10, Accounting 11, and Mathematics Foundations 12.
- Funding 50 seats in on-line courses for small high schools and to develop three new online courses to add to current on-line course complement.

Commitment

In Progress

146. Amend the mandate of School Advisory Councils to provide parents with a more meaningful role. (p.37)

Action

- Released the Minister's Response to the issues raised through the School Advisory Council's consultation December 2004 which addressed the need for clear roles and responsibilities; orientation support for new and current members; strengthening of relationships and communication with school advisory councils (SACs), the school board and the department; and supporting SACs in enhancing parent-school communication.
- Developing a SAC resource manual to be revised Fall 2005 through user focus groups, with an expected publication date of December 2005.

Commitment

In Progress

147. Establish a province-wide School Accreditation Program with public reporting. Schools that need assistance will be provided with targeted resources, through the school advisory council, to support the school's improvement plan. (p.37)

Action

- Evaluated pilot project process Fall 2004. Recommendations from the evaluation became part of the planning for the province-wide implementation.
- Started planning province-wide implementation of School Improvement Planning/Accreditation model piloted in 16 schools over the past two years. This will help schools through an extensive review of their student achievement and school performance to develop and implement a school improvement plan.
- Schools for 2005-06 identified by boards; 50 schools participating in 2005-06. Increasing participation rate over next three years, with all schools taking part by end of Year 5.
- Currently implementing improvement plans for École NDA and École secondaire de Clare.
- Adding three CSAP schools in the 2005/2006 school year: Rive-Sud, Pubnico-Ouest, and Beau-Port.

Commitment

✔

148. Launch an interactive website to provide parents with plain language information on what students are expected to learn and achieve at different grades levels. (p.37)

Action

- Launched interactive website internally March 2004.

Commitment

✔ *149. Initiate structural, administrative and accountability changes, in consultation with teachers, schools boards and parent groups, to improve student results. (p.37)*

Action

- On August 1, 2004, implemented a new governance structure reverting three pilot district school boards in South Shore, Tri-County and Strait school boards back to regional school boards.

Commitment

In Progress *150. Streamline the Teacher Certification process for faster turn-around time and broader course recognition. (p.37)*

Action

- Passed Education Act regulations in June 2004 regarding improved teacher mobility - one aspect of improving the efficiency of the teacher certification process.
- Reviewing teacher certification processes to ensure efficiency and examining opportunities to achieve increased mobility into Nova Scotia for teachers in targeted areas.
- To assist boards to hire and retain teachers, announced with NSTU that all teachers from outside the province receive their Nova Scotia certification under the same rules as teachers certified here as of August 1, 2004.

Commitment

✔ *151. Continue to expand professional development opportunities for teachers in priority areas such as math and language arts. (p.37)*

Action

- Offering 13 Summer Institutes Summer 2005.
- Providing professional development for Active Readers 7 to 9 lead teachers September 2005.
- Providing Dynamic Classroom Assessment facilitator training for mathematics junior high leaders Fall 2005.
- Planning for Racial Equity Policy in-service education programs for Grades 7 to 9 November 2005.
- Senior high literacy initiatives in 2004 included English 10 Plus pilots; the introduction of *Writers in Action 10: A Teaching Resource,* and the development of *Écrivains à l'oeuvre 10 et 11* resources; the development of *English 10: A Reading Resource,* and professional development for Grade 10 teacher leaders.
- In April 2004, mandated two PD days for English 10 teachers for 2004–05.
- Completed cognitive coaching training for 52 math mentors April 2004.
- Conducted workshops for 140 junior high resource teachers June 2004.
- Completed PD materials for Grades 10, 11 and 12 math leaders in each school April 2004.
- Held a series of 12 workshops for 285 senior high and adult high school math teachers Spring 2004.
- Conducted professional development workshops for lead teachers to support implementation of Social Studies P-2 and 7, Science 3-4 and 7-8, Writers in Action 7, English 10, Mathematics Essentials 10 and Computer Programming 12.
- Provided professional development for implementation of Science Humaines m - 2 and 7e année (immersion).
- In collaboration with partners, will plan, develop and introduce a teacher professional growth planning process. Conducted initially in test sites - will support teachers to help them meet the educational improvement goals of their schools, and control their own professional development based on what they need to best serve their students.

Commitment

Pending 152. *Audit the number of teachers teaching out of their field of study. Working with school boards, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and universities, identify strategies to better match teachers to their subject specialities. (p.37)*

Action

- Undertaking research project in 2006-07 to address this issue.

Commitment

✔ 153. *Continue to invest in school construction, additions and renovations. (p.37)*

Action

- By the end of 2005-06, will have invested approximately $57 million in new school construction and major capital repairs - $38 million to build new schools and approximately $19 million for additions and alterations - to P-12 schools across Nova Scotia.

Commitment

In Progress *154. Implement the recommendations of the Provincial Student Education Council report on bullying, including providing province-wide training sessions for teachers. (p.37)*

Action

- Provided professional development on the Code of Conduct Guidelines for 100 schools Spring 2005.
- Offered provincial in-servicing for lead teams August 2005.
- Will support phase-in of the Positive and Effective Behavioural Support initiative, including School Code of Conduct Guidelines; a resource guide, and Meeting Behaviour Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments in current fiscal year. Developed programming documents and guidelines to support implementation of the School Code of Conduct. A two-day provincial in-service for all schools will be provided over the next three years.
- Included in the School Code of Conduct Guidelines a standardized provincial Behaviour Incident Tracking Form for September 2005 (for the 100 schools that received professional development on the Code of Conduct Guidelines) to establish a database for tracking and monitoring student behavioural incidents to create effective prevention and intervention strategies for maintaining positive behaviour in safe school environments.

In Progress

Commitment

155. Increase the number of community college seats by another 1,200 through multi-year funding for the Community College Growth Plan. The plan includes a new Metro campus and upgrades at each of the province's 13 campuses. (p.40)

Action

- Budget 2005 added $30.1 million, for a three-year total of $68.9 million, in capital improvements and increased the operating grant to the Nova Scotia Community College by an additional $7.8 million, bringing it to $81.8 million for 2005-2006.
- Proceeding with major community college expansion which includes increasing capacity through renovations at the Annapolis Valley, Kingstec, Pictou and Truro campuses and the I.W. Akerley campus. Completed in 2004-05 renovations at the following NSCC campuses: Burridge, Cumberland Shelburne, Strait Area, Marconi, and Lunenburg. At completion, NSCC enrolment capacity will have expanded by 1,000 seats in Metro and by 1,500 seats in rural campuses, enhancing Nova Scotia's ability to meet labour market demands.
- In June 2004, unveiled detailed plans for new Metro Campus which will bring 1,800 students to the Dartmouth waterfront, starting in 2007.

Commitment

✔ *156. Continue to expand apprenticeship training and help apprentices complete their training more quickly, including support for Nova Scotians who need to upgrade their literacy or numeracy skills before pursuing trades training. (p.40)*

Action

- Consulted with stakeholders on proposed changes to update provincial regulations to help apprentices in designated trades achieve certification.
- Budget 2005 introduced new youth apprenticeship programs to build important workplace skills and help young Nova Scotians make better career choices.
- Continuing to lead development of interprovincial exams and activate and monitor implementation of 25 examinations and continuing to lead the Atlantic Provinces Partnership to develop, revise and validate common training standards, logbooks and provincial examinations.
- Increased participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeship and workplace education programs through partnerships and initiatives such as the Joint Registration Agreement with Membertou First Nations, and the One Journey Project, a project to establish partnerships among workplaces, community groups, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education
- Completed One Journey Initiative pilot June 2004, along with the development of a training schedule, increasing sections of training by 176.
- Increased investment in apprenticeship training through the provision of additional training sections based on determined needs allowing each apprentice to progress through their technical training in a timely manner.
- Carried out Phase II of the Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative allowing development of a learning plan for every apprentice and trade qualifier.
- Piloted the Youth Apprenticeship Initiative out-of-school model, developed interactive youth friendly website, and continuing to partner with the public school system to support co-op placements in skilled trades.
- Set up a steering committee to support the development of a Mentor/Coach training module, to be incorporated in all final year apprenticeship training. Extended RFP to hire development consultant.

Commitment

In Progress

157. Increase our investment in the NS School for Adult Learners to expand opportunities for older Nova Scotians to upgrade their education and skills. (p.40)

Action

- Increased funding in 2004-05.
- Continue work on four consultation task teams on learner progress, data definitions, policies and guidelines.
- Reviewing and revising in September 2005 the Career Skills Development credit Level IV, adult learning program (Phase I).
- Worked with community-based literacy organizations in the province on a provincial program review and sustainability initiative looking at maximizing resources and exploring new service delivery and governance models.
- Launched a health literacy awareness initiative targeting primary health care providers.
- Partnered with stakeholder organizations to initiate a comprehensive professional development strategy.
- Launched Premier's Council of the Federation Literacy Award.
- Piloted six new courses in the Adult Learning Program including: Technical Writing IV, Science III, Communications III, Social Studies III, and Mathematics III.
- Developed one new course, Français Niveau 4, in the Formation générale des adultes (FGA) and developed new curriculum for FGA level III.
- Revisions to the Adult Learning Program Level II currently underway, based on four consultation sessions held with over 80 participants across the province.

Commitment

Pending

158. Increase student debt relief by doubling the employment and repayment bonuses in the new Student Debt Relief Plan. (p.40)

Action

- Planned for 2006-07.

Commitment

✔ *159. Guarantee multi-year funding for universities based on negotiated Memorandums of Understanding designed to: control tuition increases; reduce duplication; identify and support program offerings in areas that address Nova Scotia's skill needs; and make it easier to transfer credits among universities and community colleges. (p.40)*

Action

- In December 2004, the province and its universities signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cap most tuition fee increases for three years, giving universities a $34.6-million boost in funding by 2007. Estimated, on average, new funding will spare students about $1,300 each in tuition fee increases.

Commitment

In Progress *160. Develop a province-wide, comprehensive single-entry career development, education and employment service. Service would include more resources and support for in-school counselling and improve information sharing between business, labour, industry and education providers. (p.40)*

Action

- Developing Pathways resources for guidance counsellors, students, parents, and teachers to support career education and counselling services, including on-line resources to support Nova Scotia Student Life/Work Portfolio in Grade 7. Implementing also the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program, with support for professional development. Trained 23 new school teams from most boards in March 2004. Currently 106 schools are implementing the program.
- As part of the Nova Scotia Career Development Initiative, completed site visits to Career Resource Centres (CRC's) to gain understanding of the programs and services they offer in April 2004 and initiated preliminary inventory of career development programs, resources and services in June 2004. Plan in the works to ensure Nova Scotians are better able to access career development programs, services and resources needed to succeed in the labour market. This will address the training/competency needs of career service providers, the link to the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning and the connection to industry.
- Through the Canada-Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework Task Team, will determine a statement of standards and a menu of services for the continuum.

Commitment

In Progress

161. Develop, with the other Atlantic Provinces, a coordinated approach to access federal assistance for a university, community college and library capital renovation and expansion program. (p.41)

Action

- Finalized and implemented a strategy for seeking federal funding support Spring 2005. Subsequent to an agreement with the federal government, will work with the public post-secondary education institutions to develop an implementation plan.
- In 2005-06, will develop a draft protocol for the distribution of funds, consult institutions to develop final protocol for distribution of funds and administer distribution of funds.
- All Atlantic provinces agreed at the June 2005 meeting of the Council of Atlantic Premiers to engage the federal government on funding arrangements for post-secondary infrastructure renewal.

Commitment

On-going

162. Provide libraries with a greater role in the evolution of e-government services by gradually migrating Nova Scotia CAP sites into the Nova Scotia Provincial Library System, and by designating libraries as a key player in the delivery of e-government services. (p.41)

Action

- CAP networks were developed by communities. In some cases libraries are lead or involved, but in other cases, libraries are not involved at the community level. The province will be maintaining the current system of management for the Community Access Program in Nova Scotia.
- Libraries are playing an important role in the delivery of e-government services, having played a strong role in a pilot promoting and delivering some government services.

Protecting what Nova Scotians Value

"Caring for those in need, protecting our unique culture and environment, and supporting the varied and diverse needs of Nova Scotians are core beliefs of this government. Over the last five years, government has acted to protect Nova Scotians and what they value most."

More Support For Seniors

✔

Commitment

163. Implement our plan to cover all health care nursing home costs and protect all seniors' assets by no later than year four. (p.44)

Action

- Completed as of January 2005 at an annual total cost of $46 million.

Commitment

✔ *164. Increase the number of long-term care beds/other assisted living options, including day programs based on recommendation of Continuing Care Review (currently underway). (p.44)*

Action

- Completed report from review; information shared with district health authorities and other stakeholders.
- Updating annually information gathered from Phase I and II of this initiative to determine service requirements throughout the continuum of care in communities, increasing accuracy of projections for service development.
- Minister's Report to Nova Scotians committed to add 91 long-term care beds. Since 2003-04, 103 new beds have been open across province. (42 in Annapolis Valley District; 23 in Colchester East Hants District; 5 in Pictou County District; 2 in Cape Breton District; and 31 in Capital District)
- Set to add 25 beds in Cape Breton District. Locations of these beds will be developed as a part of a district planning process.
- Approval granted to Northwoodcare Incorporated to begin planning for a 150-space facility in Cobequid area which will offer a range of programs including long-term care, palliative care, community outreach and rehabilitation services. Northwood to release call for proposals for 25-acre site August 2005.
- Planning to establish 50 restorative care beds in locations across the province. Related standards will be developed. Development of an RFP to provide required beds in specific locations in the works.

Commitment

✔ 165. *Eliminate car insurance rate discrimination against seniors. (p.44)*

Action

- The *Automobile Insurance Reform Act*, passed in Fall 2003, ensured that, effective November 2004, age, marital status, and other non-driving related matters cannot be considered in calculating auto insurance premiums.

Commitment

✔ *166. Introduce legislation to eliminate mandatory retirement within the Civil Service. (p.44)*

Action

- Passed changes to the Public Service Superannuation Act in Fall 2003, eliminating mandatory retirement for employees defined in Act.

Commitment

In Progress

167. Dedicate additional resources to promote healthy living among older Nova Scotians and to develop community-based, peer-support and volunteer seniors' networks. (p.44)

Action

- Studying initiatives related to the physical activity of seniors in the context of the Active Healthy Living Framework development process.
- Continuing to partner with agencies concerned with seniors and voluntarism through the Seniors' Secretariat and identifying models to facilitate peer support programs. Also partnering with other provinces to develop a how-to manual of models to facilitate seniors' voluntarism.

Commitment

In Progress

168. Increase the income ceiling for seniors applying to the Senior Citizen's Assistance Program (SCAP) from $20,000 to $22,000. Program provides seniors with assistance to make emergency repairs to their home. (p.44)

Action

- Options for greater accessibility to SCAP and Provincial Housing Emergency Repair Program currently being reviewed with particular emphasis on initiatives that will assist seniors with energy costs.

Commitment

In Progress

169. Launch a five-year Elder Abuse Strategy, including a comprehensive, coordinated campaign involving government, non-government agencies, as well as the private sector, designed to identify and address elder abuse. Strategy will also include new legislation to stiffen fines for those who physically, emotionally or financially abuse seniors. (p.45)

Action

- Invested $150,000 to help set up Nova Scotia's first Task Force on Aging and launched new efforts to prevent elder abuse through Seniors' Secretariat.
- Expanded the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy Committee to include more partners and stakeholders, particularly those with an interest in elder abuse education and financial abuse prevention.
- Releasing an updated elder abuse prevention strategy and hosting the province's first-ever elder abuse awareness day Fall 2005.

Supporting Families and Nova Scotians in Need

✔ **Commitment**

170. Protect homeowners from sudden and dramatic increases in property assessments by working with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) to establish a limit on yearly increases in cases where there has been little or no physical change to the property. (p.46)

Action

- Passed Bill 40 providing for a limit on taxable increases in residential and resource property.

On-going **Commitment**

171. Improve childcare options through more childcare spaces and better training for childcare professionals. (p.46)

Action

- Added $3.4 million August 2005 to 20 child care centres in the province to expand and create new child care spaces through the Expansion Grants and Loans program.
- Announced an additional 125 portable subsidized spaces for low-income families, bringing the total number of subsidized spaces in the province to more than 2,880 - 609 of which are portable.
- Announced in August 2005 consultations on a new, five-year plan for child care. Group sessions are being held across the province; surveys and a toll-free comment line are also available to help Nova Scotians share their ideas on investments in child care. Deadline for comment: September 30, 2005.
- Early childhood education training institutions have continued to offer pre-service and a range of in-service training and professional development opportunities throughout the province. Additional initiatives, including the retention and recruitment of early child care educators, being considered under the 2005 Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

✔ **Commitment**

172. Establish in partnership with the Abilities Foundation and other organizations representing Nova Scotians with disabilities, a wheelchair recycling demonstration project for children 15 years and under. (p.46)

Action

- Budget 2005 invested $500,000 to the Abilities Foundation of Nova Scotia for province's first wheelchair recycling program to assist children 18 years of age and under. Launched July 2005.
- Established steering committee to assist with program direction and evaluation for the four-year project.

Commitment

✔ *173. Introduce legislation that mirrors proposed federal legislation so that families can spend more time at home with a family member receiving palliative care at home. (p.46)*

Action

- Passed legislation in Fall 2003 providing eight weeks of leave to employees who wish to provide palliative care to a parent, child or spouse, without fear of losing their jobs.

Commitment

✔ *174. Continue to fund programs to improve access for Nova Scotians with disabilities, particularly the ACCESS-ability program and Dial-a-Ride. (p.46)*

Action

- Budget 2005 invested $250,000 to ensure that Nova Scotians with disabilities have access to their local community centre, legion, or library.
- Budget 2005 increased subsidy for non-profit operators providing accessible transportation from $1.41 to $1.60 per capita bringing the total amount invested this year to improve transportation for Nova Scotians with disabilities to $550,000. Over the past five years, government spent $1.4 million to make buildings more accessible and $1.6 million to improve accessible transportation.
- Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) provides funding to eight accessible community-based transportation services covering nine counties. New funding formula introduced Spring 2005.
- Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP) projects announced Summer 2005 include: a wheelchair bus for HRM through Walter Callow Wheelchair Bus, a new van for Need-a-Lift Transportation Services in HRM, a new van for Trans County Transportation Society to service Annapolis, Digby and Kingston-Greenwood regions of the province, and a new van in Guysborough.
- Invested funds to help extend Dial-a-Ride service into Digby County, providing transportation services for rural Nova Scotians who have disabilities, are on low incomes or are elderly, and who need safe, affordable and accessible transportation.

Commitment

✔ *175. Eliminate Motor Vehicle Registration fees on community-based Accessible Transportation. (p.46)*

Action

- Provided full rebates to the community-based accessible transportation services for motor vehicle registration fees and the Utility and Review Board (UARB) motor carrier licence fees.

Environment

Commitment

In Progress

176. Implement Nova Scotia's Green Plan, following public consultation, and introduce amendments to the Environment Act to update, clarify and strengthen the law. (p.47)

Action

- Completed public consultation process.
- Developed amendments to the *Environment Act* - released in June 2004 for further public input , resulting in further refinement of amendments proposed.
- Progress made on all green plan commitments. Interdepartmental Green Plan Implementation Steering Committee developed a draft corporate Environmental Management Policy. Work underway to develop a report on progress that describes the path forward for this initiative and on numerous initiatives consistent with Green Plan principles.

Commitment

In Progress

177. Work with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to examine joint provincial/municipal opportunities for addressing illegal dumping and derelict vehicles. (p.47)

Action

- Involved in discussions through subcommittee on illegal dumping. Produced draft report in 2004.
- Working with the Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB) Nova Scotia and municipalities on illegal dumping. RRFB Nova Scotia continues to operate a derelict vehicle program, in partnership with municipalities.

Commitment

✔ *178. Support new clean water and sewer projects under the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Works program. (p.47)*

Action

- Total value of water and sewer projects under CNSIP since the beginning of the program is $115,766,731 - Provincial contribution to the water and sewer projects is $37,607,235. Directed approximately 80 per cent of approved funding under CNSIP towards water and sewer projects in Nova Scotia. Examples include:
  - Hwy 337, Sewer and Water Extension, Antigonish County;
  - Cornwallis Park Water Metering and Water Chlorination; Annapolis County;
  - Smith's Cove Sewage Collection and Treatment, Digby County;
  - Meteghan Wastewater Treatment Facility Phase 2, Clare;
  - Birch Grove Sewage Collection and Treatment, CBRM;
  - Byng Avenue Sewer, CBRM;
  - Riverton Sewer Upgrade; Pictou County;
  - Herring Cove Sewer and Water Services, HRM;
  - Prince's Lodge Sewer and Water, HRM; and
  - Tusket Sewage System, Argyle.
- Signed agreement worth $145.2 million over five years of federal gas tax revenues invested in communities across Nova Scotia, focusing on green municipal infrastructure. Program funds will be provided by the federal government with the Province providing administration and in-kind contributions through the various programs and services already in place to assist Nova Scotia municipalities.
- In final stages of negotiating an agreement with Infrastructure Canada for a Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF). The agreement will be for a $111 million municipal infrastructure program cost-shared evenly between federal/provincial/municipal governments (To be administered by the Canada/Nova Scotia Infrastructure Secretariate, operated through SNSMR.)

Commitment

In Progress

179. Complete the remaining elements of Nova Scotia's Clean Drinking Water and Energy strategies. (p.47)

Action

- Completed all Drinking Water Strategy Action Plan items, on time and within budget. Key action items include:
  - due diligence handbook for municipal councillors and public utility commissioners;
  - public information materials for private well owners;
  - program for compliance monitoring of public drinking water systems; and
  - working with municipalities to have comprehensive water supply protection, treatment and operational strategies in place for all municipal water supplies.
- Developing next steps of a comprehensive water resource management strategy by October 2005.
- Released draft changes for public review July 2004 to update the Air Quality Regulations (Environment Act) in relation to Energy Strategy commitments. Updated in March 2005, establishing the following targets:
  - Reduced emissions cap (including a 25 percent reduction in annual SO_2 emissions by NSPI);
  - Further 25 per cent reduction of SO_2 emissions from existing sources, to a cumulative 50 per cent reduction from existing sources by 2010;
  - 20 per cent reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions from 2000 levels by 2009;
  - established emissions cap for mercury for NSPI (30 per cent reduction in mercury emissions); and
  - Two per cent limit on SO_2 content of heavy fuel oils.

Commitment

In Progress

180. Expand the Eco-Efficiency Program, in concert with the federal government, to help businesses reduce pollution. (p.48)

Action

- Completed 18-month pilot March 2005. Fifteen companies participated with $1.3 million in annual cost savings identified. Environmental opportunities identified include: reduction of 12,000m_3 of water consumption, 3000 tonnes of solid waste, 2.3 tonnes of toxics, and 5400 tonnes of GHG's.
- Results of an independent evaluation were very favourable. Received funding commitments from federal and provincial agencies ($100,000) for the first year of a program extension. (NSEL, $15,000; OED, $15,000; NS Energy, $13,000; Environment Canada, $15,000; ACOA, $38,000; NS Power, $4,000) Two proposals remain outstanding. Commencement of three-year program anticipated for Fall 2005.

Commitment

In Progress

181. Expand the number of stewardship agreements with industry, including developing a standard electronics waste stewardship program in consultation with the other Atlantic Provinces. (p.48)

Action

- Working with other Atlantic Provinces and industry on a $100,000 electronics waste feasibility study.
- In February 2005, consulted on draft electronic waste regulations which would ban computers, televisions and other electronic products from landfills and have industry take more responsibility for environmentally-responsible product design, and restoring and recycling old products.

Commitment

✔ *182. Acquire more coastal lands and wilderness areas for protection from development, where financial resources allow and in partnerships with such organizations as the Nature Conservancy of Canada. (p.48)*

Action

- Budget 2005 included $750,000 to enhance Nova Scotia's Crown land base.
- Land acquisitions continuing. At present, over two dozen parcels have been acquired involving coastal, waterfront, wetlands, wilderness areas and a nature reserve.
- Signed "Campaign for Conservation" partnership agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) April 2005. Under the agreement, which runs until the end of March 2008, the province will provide $300,000 to the NCC. In return, the NCC will transfer lands with an appraised market value of at least $300,000 to the province. In addition, the NCC has committed to acquiring at least another $300,000 worth of land that they will manage / administer.
- Announced in March 2005 that Gully Lake and Eigg Mountain-James River would be added to Nova Scotia's system of wilderness areas. Detailed boundary maps of each area soon to be completed and then Gully Lake and Eigg Mountain-James River will be officially designated as wilderness areas.
- In July 2005, Town of Antigonish consented to have 1300ha of town-owned land added to Eigg Mountain Wilderness Area through designation under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.
- Five new Nature Reserves designated under the Special Places Protection Act in December 2004.
- Passed amendments to the Special Places Protection Act Spring 2005 reducing "red tape" by making nature reserve designation more efficient and more attractive for private landowners.
- Designated eleven parcels under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, adding to existing Wilderness Areas.
- Leading review of lighthouse properties in response to the Ottawa's lighthouse divestiture program.
- Natural Resources negotiating for the acquisition of several Wilderness Areas inholdings and coastal properties.
- Processing acquisition files (owners unknown, Ducks Unlimited, Stora replacement).
- Reached Partnership Agreement with Mahone Islands Conservation Association Summer 2005 to support acquisition of Andrews Island.

Commitment

✔ *183. Proceed with the community's recommendation to clean up the Sydney Tar Ponds, through Nova Scotia's Sydney Tar Ponds Agency, in concert with the federal government. (p.48)*

Action

- Signed in May 2004 a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Ottawa governing $400 million in funding for the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens Site Cleanup project.
- Joint federal-provincial environmental assessment of clean-up currently underway. Any changes resulting from the assessment will be reflected in the final project design.
- In June 2005, called for expressions of interest in engineering design of project. Successful bidder will also be responsible for managing construction contracts during clean up. Request for proposals will follow and be completed by year's end.

Cultural Diversity

Commitment

✔ 184. *Appoint Nova Scotia's first Minister responsible for African-Nova Scotian Affairs. (p.48)*

Action

- Established in August 2003 the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs.
- First Minister for African Nova Scotian Affairs sworn in August 18, 2003.
- Announced CEO for the office September 2005.
- Minister and staff visited African Nova Scotian communities across the province and met with numerous organizations and individuals.

Commitment

In Progress

185. Implement the operational recommendations outlined in the BLAC Report. (p.48)

Action

- Doubled $500,000 investment of 2004 as part of a $4.1-million commitment to implement the operational recommendations of BLAC Report over four years. Initiatives implemented in 2005-06 include:
  - $156,000 to aid in the development and delivery of programs for Africentric Learning Institute;
  - $310,000 for school boards to hire eight new student-support workers;
  - $90,000 to the Council of African Canadian Education to support its operations;
  - $50,000 to implement youth leadership and development programs;
  - $30,000 to increase parental involvement in the education system;
  - $49,000 to increase Community College Awards by 50 per cent, to $1,800 per student;
  - $50,000 for short-term, employment-related training for which students are not eligible to receive student loan support;
  - $80,000 to expand adult programming;
  - $100,000 to establish a program to enable African Nova Scotian youth to upgrade their skills with the goal of entering community college programs, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College; and
  - $56,000 to continue implementing curriculum that represents a diverse population.
- Education and the Council of African Canadian Education established a review committee to identify needs of the Africentric Learning Institute to review its structure, role and function within the community, its sustainability and programming and capital requirements.

Commitment

✔

186. Commit to multi-year funding for the Black Business Initiative. (p.48)

Action

- Invested $500,000 in BBI in 2005.
- Invested $500,000 June 2004 for the training, marketing and loans programs delivered to the African-Nova Scotian business community by the Black Business Initiative.

Commitment

In Progress

187. Extend support to the Aboriginal Open for Business Centre to encourage investment in Nova Scotia's First Nations' businesses. (p.48)

Action

- Approved plan to rename OFB Unama'ki to OFB Mi'kmaq and expand services, through outreach, to all Nova Scotia First Nation communities.
- Committed funding to OFB Mi'kmaq through the First Nations Economic Development Fund.

Commitment

In Progress 188. *Pursue efforts to finalize a framework agreement with the federal government and the Mi'Kmaq that will identify issues to be negotiated by all parties. (p.48)*

Action

- Negotiators completed a Framework Agreement to establish the process and topics for negotiation of treaty and Aboriginal rights issues between the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, Canada and Nova Scotia. Discussions on Framework began in Fall 2003.
- Mi'kmaq negotiators advising bands about the negotiations and the specifics of the Framework Agreement.

Consumer Protection/Insurance

Commitment

✔ 189. Reduce automobile insurance by an average of at least 20 percent through a realistic 6-step plan:

1. Freeze on new rates increases from May 2003 to January 2004.
2. New restrictions on underwriting practices to prohibit discrimination based on age, sex, non-driving related matters, and previous coverage in Facility Association.
3. Requirement for a basic auto insurance package with a cap on minor injury claims and greater openness on the part of insurance companies.
4. Establish a new Automobile Insurance Review Panel to approve all insurance rates and appoint a new actuary to ensure fair underwriting practices.
5. Extend the consumer advocate position.
6. Work with other Atlantic Provinces to harmonize insurance legislation and regulations and assess costs and benefits of a regional public insurance system. (p.50)

Action

- In Fall 2003, passed Automobile Insurance Reform Act enhancing May 2003 rate freeze by rolling back insurance premiums 20 per cent (effective November 2003 to November 2004) requiring insurance companies to refund part of premiums to motorist. Stats Canada shows Nova Scotia has the lowest rate for insurance among provinces with equivalent systems or the 5th lowest in Canada.
- New rules came into effect August 1, 2003 which banned companies from refusing to issue or renew auto insurance for an existing or potential customer on any of the following grounds: age, gender, marital status, age of vehicle, previous coverage by Facility Association, a previous refusal of insurance coverage, previous not-at-fault accidents, making a late payment, or a lapse in auto insurance coverage of less than two years. Since October 2004, number of drivers insured through Facility dropped by 25 per cent.

- The Automobile Insurance Reform Act also:
  - Ensured that, effective November 2004, age, marital status, and other non-driving related matters cannot be considered in calculating auto insurance premiums.
  - Placed $2,500 cap on minor injury claims.
  - Created Nova Scotia Insurance Review Board and appointed chair, members and staff. Developed practice and procedural guidelines and distributed to insurance companies for July 1st application date. Rate applications are currently being filed and are under review.
  - Extended consumer advocate position to December 31, 2005.
- In October 2003, Council of Atlantic Premiers released three-volume report of the Atlantic Canada Insurance Harmonization Task Force which found:
  - Atlantic market large enough to be served by common regulator, one set of regulations and one premium review board;
  - Concluded 88 per cent of core elements of auto insurance legislation are already, or can readily be, harmonized;
  - Found no "sufficient reason" to transform system to government monopoly;
  - Concluded that sole supplier for Atlantic provinces would not provide "effective, long-term reduction of auto insurance premiums for Atlantic Canada motorists".
- Premiers met in Spring 2005 on issue of Harmonized Insurance legislation. Continuing support of adoption of harmonized legislation throughout the region through Superintendent of Insurance. Also produced information tools on a wide range of consumer insurance issues that could be shared regionally.

Commitment

✔ *190. Allow for a trial period of Sunday shopping six weeks prior to Christmas, followed by a Province-wide plebiscite in the fall of 2004 to determine if Nova Scotians want Sunday Shopping year-round. (p.50)*

Action

- Passed legislation in Fall 2003 allowing a six-week trial of Sunday shopping in 2003.
- Plebiscite to be included with October 2004 municipal elections ballot.
- Amendments to business and labour legislation addressed issues surrounding Sunday shopping and associated worker and business rights.

Safer Communities/Streets

Commitment

In Progress

191. Adopt new anti-drunk driving measures such as more sobriety check points. (p.51)

Action

- Revitalized in January 2004 the Alcohol and Drug Countermeasures and Traffic Enforcement Committee (ADCTEC), a subcommittee of the Road Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC), includes provincial and municipal governments and agencies, law enforcement agencies, as well as the insurance, media, safety and education sectors. Participation continues. Recent activities include:
  - Reviewed drug impaired driving consultation document developed nationally, with new training through RCMP underway; and
  - Put in place a calendar year of checkpoint programs for municipal police forces and the RCMP to focus on road safety issues, including a month-long series in December focussing on impaired driving.
- Reviewed issues and opportunities, including submissions from MADD, to look at ways to reduce impaired driving and strengthen enforcement efforts.

Commitment

✔

192. Continue to urge the federal government to make the National Sex Offender Registry retroactive so that vital information on previously convicted offenders is available to police and law enforcement agencies. (p.51)

Action

- Lobbied for retroactive sex offender registry at Fall 2003 meeting of federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) ministers responsible for justice.
- Retrospectivity was adopted as an alternative to register all offenders under sentence at the time the registry came into force December 2004. Nine designated registration sites went live in Nova Scotia at that time.
- Law enforcement officials at the sites have been trained in the collection and registration of offender information; have been given a 1-800 number to allow for inquiries to be made on the system by the Nova Scotia Sex Offender Information Registration Centre, in the event they have a crime of a sexual nature and require a search to be conducted. Prosecutors with the Public Prosecution Service and court officials are aware of the new procedures and will be making application for orders when a designated offence has occurred.

Commitment

✔ *193. Sponsor an all-party resolution of the legislature calling on Ottawa to stop allowing conditional sentences for violent crimes, like manslaughter and sexual assault. (p.51)*

Action

- At FPT ministers' meeting in January 2005, Nova Scotia renewed call to federal government, along with other provinces, for a change in the way conditional sentencing used.
- In April 2004, received all-party support for resolution calling on federal justice minister to amend the Criminal Code, as recommended to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, to place appropriate limits on the use of conditional sentencing protocols so that the punishment fits the crime.
- At Fall 2003 FPT meeting of justice ministers, Province lobbied federal government for less use of conditional sentencing for violent offenders.

Commitment

✔ *194. Increase resources to support the Violence Case Co-ordination Program. (p.51)*

Action

- In response to concerns relating to domestic violence, $157,500 was provided to police agencies and an additional $100,000 allocated to police agencies for 2004-05. Budget commitment for program has now been set at $257,000/year.
- Budget 2005 provided $250,000 to implement recommendations from a review of family violence services across Nova Scotia.
- Pocket guide for police on spousal/intimate partner violence developed and distributed to police agencies across the province. In June 2005, more than 80 domestic violence educators throughout the justice system received training on use of pocket guide.

Commitment

✔ *195. Implement a new Justice Enterprise Information Network (JEIN) to improve information sharing amongst justice officials. (p.51)*

Action

- JEIN fully operational since February 2005. Nova Scotia now has one of the leading integrated justice information systems. Major functions of the system include offender tracking, court case management, automated support for production of documents, recording and processing of fines imposed and corrections case management. Stakeholders will be able to use enhanced inquiry and update features to support evidence-based decision-making. Benefits include:
  - System capable of generating better reports to enhance decision-making and improve administration of justice;
  - Provides access to a number of users within the justice community, making it easier and faster to get information and avoid re-entry of information, speeding up justice processes for the public;
  - Saves public money by avoiding multiple IT systems for each part of justice (courts, corrections, etc.); and
  - System can grow and change to meet evolving needs of the justice system, expectations of the public and changes in legislation.

Commitment

In Progress *196. Improve access to the Supreme Court Family Division and urge the federal government to expand services province-wide. (p.51)*

Action

- Submitted proposal to Federal Government in June 2004, outlining plan for expanding Family Division province-wide, which would ensure equal access to justice, eliminate jurisdictional confusion and strengthen judicial resources. The Judges Act now before Parliament. Discussions underway with federal government about the number of new judges for the province.
- Family Law Information Centres have been opened in both Halifax and Sydney and improved intake processes at both centres.
- Developed a recalculation of support orders program.

Commitment

In Progress 197. *Establish a province-wide youth court to ensure effective prosecution of young offenders. (p.51)*

Action

- Justice continuing to work with the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court to transfer youth matters (12-15 year olds) from Family Court to Provincial Court in the remainder of the province prior to the expansion of Family Division.

Commitment

In Progress

198. Increase support for victims of crime, including through additional measures to force criminals to provide restitution. (p.51)

Action

- Completed detailed analysis of the restitution process. Developed "How-to" booklet to assist victims of crime to request restitution and file restitution orders as civil judgements.
- Research report identifying barriers to victims of crime in accessing restitution under review. Committee of justice partners meeting Fall 2005 to review recommendations and examine options to reduce barriers such as the multitude of fees associated with filing an order and issues associated with those who breach restitution orders.

Commitment

✔

199. Continue to urge Ottawa to match Nova Scotia's increased support for legal aid. (p.51)

Action

- Continued lobby efforts at meeting of FPT deputy justice ministers in June 2004 and renewed call at FPT ministers' meeting in January 2005 for new, long-term federal funding for civil legal aid services and a return to 50-50 cost sharing for criminal legal aids.
- Budget 2005 increased provincial funding for legal aid by $1.4 million.

Commitment

✔

200. Continue to work with the federal government, RCMP and local law enforcement agencies to take whatever new steps are necessary to protect public safety in the face of new terrorist threats. (p.51)

Action

- Budget 2005 announced $6.1 million over four years to combat organized crime, criminal extremism and terrorism by enhancing the collection, analysis, sharing and dissemination of intelligence across law enforcement agencies in Nova Scotia through the Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia.

Order in the House - Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability

"Budgeting responsibly and answering to Nova Scotians remains a priority."

✔ **Commitment**

201. Continue to post uninterrupted balanced budgets. (p.55)

Action

- Tabled the fourth, consecutive balanced budget in April 2005 - a budget with a projected $63.3–million surplus. This included new program spending in key areas such as education, health, health promotion, community services and economic development, along with reasonable increases for wage settlements, tax initiatives to enhance economic competitiveness and more money for roads.

✔ **Commitment**

202. Continue to address Nova Scotia's significant infrastructure deficit with increased capital spending on roads, schools, and hospitals over the next four years. (p.55)

Action

- Budget 2005 invested about $307.5 million to improve Nova Scotia's highways, roads and bridges for the benefit of all motorists - a $44-million increase over 2004-05. Over $530 million was committed through Budgets 2004 and 2005 to infrastructure improvements , including hospital improvements, roads and new schools.

✔ **Commitment**

203. Introduce legislation and enshrine in law a three-part Debt Reduction Plan that includes: annual process of creating surpluses and contingency reserves for debt reduction; establishing a Debt Retirement Fund for retiring specific debt issues; and, designating a portion of Extraordinary Revenue to Debt Retirement Fund. (p.55)

Action

- Introduced new Debt Reduction Plan April 2005.
- Budget 2005 projects contribution toward debt reduction of $61 million.
- Applied the $830 million received from the Offshore Offset Agreement to help pay down the debt. Dominion Bond Rating Service and Moody's Investors Service both moved province's outlook from stable to positive in Summer 2005, citing the positive effects, for one, of applying those funds onto the debt.
- Launched two domestic debt deals which continues the strategy of the Debt Management Committee to borrow when market conditions are attractive and interest rates are low.

Commitment

✔ 204. Conduct, in consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, a cost/benefit analysis to determine the potential of using provincial/municipal tax exempt bonds as a means of raising capital for future municipal infrastructure improvements. (p. 55)

Action

- Researched feasibility of proposal and found not workable. Shared study results with Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities.

Commitment

✔ *205. Enhance efforts to ensure provincial tax dollars are spent for their intended purpose (i.e. school maintenance dollars are spent on school maintenance) by conducting more value for money assessments of third party spending (i.e. school boards, district health authorities and universities). (p.55)*

Action

- Conducted three value for money assessments on Health Authorities for Colchester East Hants, Pictou County and Capital Health.
- Reviewed university fiscal plans during negotiations leading to Memo of Understanding with the universities December 2005 to ensure reasonableness of cost projections.

Commitment

✔ *206. Adopt future changes to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) within reasonable time frames, to ensure Nova Scotia remains a leader in open, accountable and transparent accounting practices. (p.56)*

Action

- Continued to be national leader in complying with GAAP by monitoring initiatives on an on-going basis to ensure the province is made aware of future impacts.
- Implementing latest Public Sector Accounting Board change regarding inventory adjustments in 2005-06.
- In March 2004, recommended changes to amortization rates and thresholds as a result of a review of province's tangible capital assets policy. Nova Scotia was one of the first provinces to adopt tangible capital asset policy, in accordance with GAAP, in 1999-00.
- Continued working with Office of the Auditor General to ensure full and open disclosure on all financial reporting. As an example, as recommended, the impact of the 2001 census adjustment on 2003-04 was included in the December 2003 forecast update.

Commitment

In Progress *207. Identify and implement new opportunities for bulk purchasing at the provincial level. (p.56)*

Action

- Targeted public sector cost savings by including the MASH sector in contract pricing to increase total contract quantities. Initiated development of a notification process to inform the MASH sector of government contract pricing opportunities.

Commitment

✔ *208. Introduce standard accounting, payroll and human resource systems for larger public service entities to ensure maximum value for money and to enhance accountability throughout the broader public service. (p.56)*

Action

- HR/Payroll system for school boards slated to be completed November 2005. RFP process for implementation of SAP Financials and HR/Payroll within district health authorities underway. NSLC has chosen SAP as its software provider for financials, HR and other inventory and retail systems, with implementation due to begin soon. Planning to put in place standard accounting, payroll, and human resources systems in district health authorities underway, with an RFP for implementation due to be issued by October 2005.
- Project eMerge resulted in delivery of an HR/Payroll system for the provincial government April 2005. System will help province and school boards better manage human resources and payroll information and create more standardized processes for entering, protecting, and using human resource and payroll data.
- Completed initial implementation of SAP's tax and water billing system within CBRM in Spring 2005. Implementation within other municipalities to follow, with Municipality of East Hants and Halifax Regional Water Commission set for Fall 2005.
- Provided support to Halifax Regional Water Commission's implementation of SAP financial system. Implementation will be expanded to include municipal water billing October 2005.
- Completed implementation of the Treasury module within SAP for the Farm Loan Board and Fisheries Loan Board to replace existing and outdated systems March 2005.

Conclusion

The following document represents a summary of the initiatives achieved to date, their current status or steps taken to achieve the intent of the commitments made in 2003 in *Blueprint for building a better Nova Scotia*. In many cases there is significantly more work being undertaken within one or more department or agency to ensure the commitment is fulfilled, however, generally only highlights are given.

There are many sources to go to for further information. To tap into the government site, go to www.gov.ns.ca.

The following are links to several key reference documents for further information on government policy and initiatives:

Budget 2005-06
www.gov.ns.ca/finance/budget05

Your Health Matters - Working Together Toward Better Care
www.gov.ns.ca/health/downloads/your_health_matters.pdf

Learning for Life II - Brighter Futures Together
www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/learning_for_life_II/LearningforLifeII.pdf

Nova Scotia Government Business Plan 2005-06
www.gov.ns.ca/finance/budget05/GovtBusPlan2005.pdf